

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
January 15, 2019
Great Hall, Town Hall**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Those present included Committee Chair Matt Kelley, Vice Chair Melissa Martin, Secretary Linda Chow, and members Michael D'Ortenzio Jr. and Sharon Gray; Superintendent David Lussier, and Assistant Superintendents Joan Dabrowski and Cindy Mahr. Mr. Kelley announced that the meeting is being recorded by local media.

PUBLIC COMMENT No one present wished to speak.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. reported that he and Ms. Martin attended a recent **Fiske PTO meeting** where there was good discussion regarding the budget and the various upcoming facilities projects. Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. also provided an update on the ongoing **track and field projects** including the new **softball field** which is on the warrant for the spring Town Meeting. There are two options for the new field: one at the practice field closest to the skating pond and the other is the current location of the softball field. DPW is working with the NRC and the architect on the project, to finalize the best location. Once a location is selected, the architect will prepare detailed designs and ideally will have bids in hand at Town Meeting for a vote on an appropriation. Regarding the **lacrosse wall**, the DPW has revised the sketch and once finalized, they will discuss it with the Facilities Management Department which uses the nearby Field House and they will also provide outreach to neighbors. The Committee will then review the proposal and subsequently vote on it. Funds will come from the Field Fund and it is hoped the wall will be ready for spring lacrosse. Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. also reported on the **Aqueduct bathroom project**. The current bathroom is not connected to sewer, and the proposal is to remove the current bathroom building and replace it with a new building that is connected to the Town's sewer system. One of the Playing Fields Task Force members has recommended a company that repurposes shipping containers into portable bathroom and storage spaces. The DPW is investigating this option. With regard to the **bathrooms in Phase II of the track and field project**, the DPW would like to review the success of the repurposed shipping container model to determine if it can be used for the track and field bathrooms. Feedback on portable trailer bathrooms installed this fall was positive. The DPW will be re-issuing the RFP for the **team rooms**, but requesting slightly used facilities and a more flexible delivery time in hopes that these measures will bring down the cost. Other major upcoming projects taking place at **Sprague** this summer are the **tennis court replacement** and the **replacement of the two turf fields**, the latter of which will also be on the warrant for the upcoming Town Meeting. The goal is to have this work completed by end of summer 2019.

Ms. Gray reported that the SBC voted a tentative short list of four options for the **Hunnewell School project**: two addition/renovation options and two options that are all new build. She briefly described each of the options. The SBC will be voting on a final short list on January 31st. A public forum is scheduled for January 29th at the Hunnewell gym to discuss the short list and next steps.

Ms. Chow removed herself from the table.

Ms. Gray reported that on Thursday, January 17th, the SBC will be interviewing firms for the **OPM for the MSBA Hardy/Upham project**.

Ms. Chow rejoined the meeting.

Ms. Martin provided an update on the **Middle School Piping Project** indicating that she attended the PBC meeting on Thursday, January 10. PBC is in the process of finalizing bid documents with target date of 2/1 for release of bid documents. The bid documents will include clauses to ensure there will be an alternative heating solution if the boilers are not installed prior to the need for heating.

Ms. Chow reported that she and Dr. Lussier attended last week's **Central Council** meeting where discussion topics included the WPS budget and diversity. Ms. Chow thanked Dr. Lussier for his participation in the **Diversity Panel** which was held as part of the Board of Selectmen meeting on January 14th. She also thanked the organizers of the forum, Selectman Beth Sullivan Woods and World of Wellesley President Michelle Chalmers.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lussier thanked the Board of Selectmen for facilitating the **Diversity Forum**. He also expressed his appreciation to Central Council and the individual PTOs for their engagement on how to make Wellesley a more welcoming community to those in our community for whom English is not their first language, which was also a focus of last night's forum. Dr. Lussier reported the **Strategic Plan Advisory Committee** is holding its second meeting on Wednesday night. He thanked Ms. Martin and Ms. Chow for their work in preparation of the meeting. He hopes to have a draft of the plan for the Committee's review by the of the school year. He also reported that Dr. Dabrowski, along with administrators and elementary staff members, are doing great work around the elementary standards-based report card over the last two years. School Committee will be briefed soon, with the final product presented for approval later in the year.

CONSENT AGENDA

The minutes of December 17, 18, 19 and 20(day), 2018 were previously distributed for review. After a brief discussion, upon a motion made by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. D'Ortenzio, Jr., the Committee **VOTED** to approve the December 17, 2018 minutes as amended. The vote was 4 in favor; 0 against; 1 abstention.

After an amendment proposed by Ms. Gray on the December 18th minutes, and upon a motion made by Ms. Martin and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee **unanimously VOTED** to approve the December 18, 19, 20(day), 2018 minutes as amended.

Approval of the December 20, 2018 evening meeting minutes was deferred.

FY20 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Dr. Lussier discussed the proposal to restructure some of the positions in the Special Education Department which is included in the FY20 budget. He indicated that as this proposal was being presented, the Director of Student Services experienced a medical

issue which requires her to be out for an undetermined amount of time. As a result of this unforeseen occurrence and the work required to make these changes if approved, it was decided to withdraw this recommendation until there is stability in the role of Student Service Director. Dr. Lussier and Ms. Mahr then reviewed how removal of this recommendation will impact the FY20 budget in terms of dollars and FTEs.

The Committee then continued its review of the FY20 budget starting with the Strategic Plan positions which is where they left off at the previous meeting. There was a lengthy discussion relative to the proposal for the Director of Diversity. Although most Committee members are generally in support of this concept, there was concern about how this will fit in overall with the other budgetary requests. Mr. Kelley was not in support of this position noting he is not convinced that the position will support the significant investment required, especially in this budget climate where overall budget requests are significant. He believes that the work around diversity is important, and is something that all teachers and staff must be aware of, but believes this work should be woven into the work that is done every day, rather than creating a new position to achieve it. He would be more inclined to support more direct services to students through social emotion learning or academic supports, rather than an administrative position to coordinate this type of work.

Other Critical Need Positions were discussed. It was noted that the .2 FTE WMS Mathematics Department Head overlap with the outgoing department head is no longer needed. There was discussion and support for the increase in FTE for the Assistant Athletic Director noting the work that has been accomplished to date by this position has resulted in important improvements to the Athletic Department. There was discussion and support for the addition of a part time secretary for the WHS main office. This request has been included in the budget for the last several years.

The Committee again discussed the request of 1 FTE for the anticipated addition of an elementary section, and the concern of how this will be viewed in light of declining enrollment. The Superintendent was asked about his level of confidence in the need for the additional section and whether it can be eliminated for now and added later if it is deemed necessary. Dr. Lussier reminded the Committee of the uncertainty of enrollment projections, and that there is not always a direct correlation between FTEs and student enrollment. There is also the issue of class guidelines that influence decisions on sections.

The Committee discussed at length that the appropriate guideline for the FY20 budget, with most members indicating 3.75 percent increase is the upper limit.

The Committee went through the budget proposals on an item by item basis to determine what can be eliminated to bring the budget closer to the 3.75 percent guideline from the current 3.91 percent. Considerations included scaling back on Grade 6 World Language offerings; elimination of the Academic Resource Center at the high school; consideration to removing one or more administrative requests such as: the Director of Diversity, Director of Library and Innovation, and the reclassification of the Professional Development Coordinator, and Coordinator of Assessment and

Accountability. The Committee wants to be supportive of the District's initiatives, while being mindful of the overall Town fiscal climate.

Dr. Lussier expressed his concern with the status of proposed and current WPS investments and the ability to fund them, as it appears the fiscal landscape has shifted from discussions of an override two years ago, to the ratcheting down of budget guidelines to a level that is not sustainable.

PUBLIC COMMENT No one present wished to speak.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 8:40 pm, upon a motion made by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr., the Committee ***unanimously VOTED*** to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Kelley
Chair

Documents and Exhibits Used:

FY20 WPS Budget Overview – 1/15/19