

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
January 21, 2019
Great Hall, Town Hall**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. Those present included Chair Melissa Martin, Vice Chair Linda Chow, Secretary Matt Kelley, members Sharon Gray and Jim Roberti; Superintendent David Lussier, and Assistant Superintendents Joan Dabrowski and Cindy Mahr.

Ms. Martin announced that the meeting was being recorded by local media.

PUBLIC HEARING – FY21 BUDGET

Ms. Martin opened the public hearing at 6:31 pm. No one present wished to speak. The hearing closed at 6:32 pm.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Kelley reported he attended the **Middle School PTO** meeting last week which had a panel of WMS administrators addressing student wellness with each administrator explaining the part of their job or day that involves student wellness.

Ms. Martin reported she attended the **Green Collaborative** meeting this morning which was focused on sustainable building guidelines and net zero and low energy buildings. The Hunnewell and Hardy/Upham projects were mentioned as examples of how these principles are being incorporated into the scope of work. She provided an update on the **WMS building systems** project which is currently underway, with work continuing on the 50 percent design and cost estimates. It is planned to bring this forward to Special Town Meeting and a debt exclusion vote this coming fall. Ms. Martin acknowledged the World of Wellesley for hosting the **MLK Breakfast** on January 20th. This was an excellent opportunity to interact with the community on thought provoking issues.

Ms. Gray reported on the second meeting of the **School Wellness Advisory Committee** (SWAC) which continues to address relevant issues such as vaping and juuling, updates from the subcommittees were received, and members had an opportunity to wish SRO Evan Rosenberg well in his next endeavor, and welcoming the new SRO to the SWAC.

Ms. Chow reported she attended the **Playing Fields Task Force** meeting on January 10th, at which time Ms. Gray also attended the meeting and informed the group that at the February 6th SBC meeting there will be an opportunity to discuss playing fields needs and project construction implications relative to the Hardy/Upham project. Ms. Chow also thanked World of Wellesley for hosting the **MLK breakfast** and providing an excellent forum to discuss important issues.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Susan Clapham, Wellesley resident and former parent of WPS students, provided a statement in support of the School Committee's and Administration's work to ensure

that Wellesley children have access to great learning opportunities and physical spaces that support 21st century learning.

RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Lussier acknowledged the following individuals and groups:

Athletic Director John Brown recognized the **WHS Wrestling Team and coaches** who will be volunteering their time again this year to the Bristol Lodge Soup Kitchen in Waltham on February 6th.

Hunnewell Principal Ellen Quirk recognized teachers **Ms. Cannon and Ms. Brooks** and their **first grade students** for their awesome musical production of "Community Helpers!".

INTRODUCTION AND APPOINTMENT OF NEW SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO)

The Committee was joined by Police Chief Jack Pilecki, Deputy Chief Scott Whittemore and Officer Matthew Wall. Chief Pilecki discussed that current SRO Evan Rosenberg will be pursuing other opportunities within the Wellesley Police Department which has left a vacancy for one of the School Resource Officer positions. Chief Pilecki reviewed the selection process, noting that Dr. Lussier was part of this process, and then introduced the new WPS School Resource Officer, Matthew Wall. Officer Wall will be working primarily with the high school and some time at the Middle School. He will join SRO Kathy Poirier who was appointed as SRO in 2018. Officer Wall briefly addressed the Committee indicating he looks forward to working with students and faculty in WPS.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. Kelley, the Committee ***unanimously VOTED*** to approve the appointment of Officer Matthew Wall as the new WPS School Resource Officer and WPS Attendance Officer.

The Committee welcomed Officer Wall to WPS and also recognized Officer Rosenberg for his service to the District over the last eight years.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lussier thanked the WHS PTSO, WMS PTO, and all the WPS staff members who attended the joint **PTO/PTSO meeting in Boston** on Tuesday January 14th. There was great conversation with Wellesley and Boston parents and staff members. He emphasized the importance of such events to provide opportunities for good dialogue within the WPS community.

Dr. Lussier highlighted that the full **Enrollment Report and slides** presented to the School Committee and SBC on Thursday night are posted on the District's website.

Dr. Lussier recognized Committee members, administrators and staff members who represented WPS at the **MLK Breakfast** on Monday morning.

CONSENT AGENDA

After a brief discussion, upon a motion made by Mr. Kelley and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee ***unanimously VOTED*** to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

REDISTRICTING PRESENTATION

The Committee was joined by members of the Superintendent's Redistricting Advisory Committee and Project Manager Priya Sankalia and Geospatial Analyst Ashley Tardif, of AppGeo, the consultant working with WPS staff and Administration on redistricting.

Dr. Lussier reviewed the history of redistricting in Wellesley and the reasons a redistricting plan is needed now, including a sustained enrollment decline over the last 12 years with the overall trend continuing; aging schools; proposed new housing developments; and the requirement from the MSBA to include a redistricting plan within the feasibility study for the Upham/Hardy Project.

Dr. Lussier also discussed that the assumptions used in the development of the maps include that all schools will be 18 sections, taking into account art and special programming such as a STEAM classroom; current class guidelines set by School Committee will be used; and use of the MSBA guidelines for a targeted enrollment of 85 percent.

Ms. Sankalia reviewed the background and experience of each team member and their work with other Massachusetts districts. She introduced those working on the Superintendent's Redistricting Advisory Committee which included School Committee member Matt Kelley, members of the WPS staff and administration, as well as a parent representative from each elementary school.

Ms. Sankalia discussed the redistricting process, workflow and components used as map option building blocks. Larger versions of the map options were presented around the room. Ms. Sankalia then presented four (4) map options for the expected rebuild of the Hardy or Upham Elementary School. Two (2) map options were presented for each school. After consideration of all information, the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Redistricting will recommend to the School Committee a single map for each scenario (one for Hardy and one for Upham).

Dr. Lussier provided the Committee with an overview of the work to date, and the timeline that includes two public forums in the next week, an electronic survey that will be sent out to the community, a School Committee public hearing and deliberation on the options. It is expected that the School Committee will vote on the preferred option for both Hardy and Upham on February 25th; and present its recommendation to the SBC, which will deliberate on the matter and have a final vote on the recommended plan on April 2, 2020. An update will be provided to Town Meeting in April 2020. It is planned to submit the plan as part of the MSBA submission on May 6, 2020.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DE&I) UPDATE

The Committee was joined by Dr. Charmie Curry, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, who provided an update on her entry plan as well as the broader equity work within the District.

Dr. Curry reviewed her entry plan process including listening and learning sessions with various stakeholders such as school and district leaders, faculty and staff, students,

families and Town leaders, noting she has collected excellent data and insight from these sessions that will help inform her work.

Dr. Curry discussed other work that has been accomplished to date including building a District website for DE&I, creation of a Twitter account, and the development of a DE&I Mission Statement. She has created a committee to apply for the Big Read Grant which is a national grant that is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts. This organization provides up to \$15,000 annually to communities to participate in a community read. Dr. Curry believes this is a great opportunity for the DE&I office to engage with the wider community and read a book that is significant to the topic of DE&I.

Dr. Curry also highlighted her work with Middle School staff and students, holding an assembly on Anti-Semitism which included Rabbi Rachel Saphire. She appreciated the opportunity to share her own experiences with Middle School students and connecting it with the District's Core Values, specifically Respect for Human Differences.

An update on DE&I work was provided including the creation of the WPS DE&I Leadership Council consisting of 30 faculty members, planning staff-led Affinity groups, applying for WEF grant funds to apply towards a summer internship for high school students to work in the DE&I office; and working with the K-8 Math Achievement Gap Task Force. In addition, Dr. Curry is working with the METCO team to build a strategic plan for this program, reviewing its work and priorities to ensure success of the students.

Dr. Curry announced that the all staff Professional Day has been rescheduled to February 5th, with Dr. Dena Simmons as the keynote speaker. She invited School Committee members to attend the keynote session.

School Committee asked questions relative to Dr. Curry's work and thanked her for a thorough update.

FY21 BUDGET

Ms. Martin informed the Committee that she, Ms. Chow, Dr. Lussier and Ms. Mahr met with Board of Selectmen Chair and Vice Chair, the Finance Director and Executive Director regarding the status of the FY21 budget for the Town. She indicated the Town is currently working to close a \$380,000 gap, and there is a request for the Schools to help close this gap.

It was noted that the full Board of Selectmen will be discussing the budget at its meeting next week. There has not been a discussion regarding the Schools' since there was the clarification on how turnover was applied in the initial presentation of projected needs. It was also noted that the additional appropriation for the variability in Special Education costs is lower than had been projected in the summer, and it is planned to request funds at the Town Meeting to replenish the Special Education Stabilization Fund, however the total amount has not yet been determined. The Board of Selectmen will sponsor the article allocating these funds, and withdrawing funds from the Special Education Stabilization Fund will require votes of the Board of Selectmen and School Committee.

Ms. Martin asked if Committee members feel there are areas that can be adjusted, they can be presented this evening or at the next meeting, and the Superintendent can provide implications of such adjustments.

Dr. Lussier noted that the current FY21 budget proposal is virtually a level service budget with minimal requests for Strategic Plan and Other Critical Needs. He expressed concern that any reductions could affect level service and wondered how he can support ongoing work and the visions of the new Strategic Plan based on the current funding levels that are being approved. With regard to a reduction in capital work, it should be noted that these needs do not go away, but rather get shifted into future years, exacerbating the needs in those years, as well as incurring repair costs in the meantime.

After a discussion, it was decided that the Committee will defer any recommendations for adjustments to the budget pending the Selectmen's discussion on January 27th, just prior to the Committee's meeting on January 28th, when the Committee is slated to vote on the WPS budget. It was recognized that even if the Committee votes on the budget on January 28th, there will be ongoing discussions and possible adjustments based on evolving financial scenarios.

The Committee expressed its appreciation to Dr. Lussier, Ms. Mahr and the WPS staff for their work in preparing a fiscally responsible budget that still addresses the needs of students. The Committee also expressed its appreciation to the Board of Selectmen for its shared commitment to Special Education.

HHU UPDATES

Process and Timeline for 3rd School

Ms. Martin indicated that a question came up at the SBC meeting regarding the process and timeline for a 3rd school trigger. Ms. Gray indicated that some members of the SBC feel there may be some anxiety within the community about what the process would look like and having a process in place may put the community at ease. After a discussion, it was decided that Ms. Martin will prepare some bullet points on this topic for the Committee's consideration.

Ms. Chow removed herself from the table at 9:15 pm.

Community Forum Debrief

Ms. Gray provided a summary of the questions covered at the recent forum, noting there was good attendance at the 3-hour session. She indicated there are still some who are interested in keeping all 3 schools open; there were number of questions regarding MSBA funding and whether it was guaranteed, as well as questions on the education plan, criteria and security. The presentation is online for review.

Ms. Gray reported that the recent SBC meeting included a presentation on the FutureThink enrollment report, as well as a deep dive into some of the early options for Hardy and Upham, with conversations about aspects of each site including topography, access to the sites, cueing, etc. The main takeaway is that the SBC wants to optimize the options for both Hardy and Upham so they can be reviewed side by side.

Ms. Chow returned to the table at 9:30 pm

Ms. Martin referred to the recent OpEd article on the HHU projects published in *The Wellesley Townsman* that contain a number of inaccuracies. She has prepared and distributed a response to the Committee members that addresses these inaccuracies and explains the position of the Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT No one present wished to speak.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 9:31, upon a motion made by Mr. Kelley and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee ***unanimously VOTED*** to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Kelley
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

AppGeo WPS Redistricting Presentation

DE&I Update Presentation

Wellesley Townsman column regarding HHU