

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
February 5, 2019
Juliani Room, 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 (arrived at 6:35 pm), and members Michael D'Ortenzio Jr. and Sharon Gray; Superintendent David Lussier, and Assistant Superintendents Joan Dabrowski (arrived at 6:55 pm) and Cindy Mahr. Mr. Kelley announced that the meeting is being recorded by local media.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Buhler and Jean Walsh, Wellesley residents, expressed their concern with the 40B Projects at 680 Worcester Street and 16 Stearns Road, citing health and safety issues to students attending Sprague School and the Middle School. They reviewed their concerns with the projects and asked the Committee to attend the February 13 ZBA hearing on these projects to address safety concerns for students.

RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Lussier recognized the following individuals and groups:

From Math & Computer Science Teacher Robert Cohen: Congratulations to the **CyberPatriot Team** that earned second place in the state competition. They will represent the Commonwealth in the national semi-finals during the Feb 1-3 weekend. CyberPatriot is a national computer security competition sponsored by the Air Force. Over 3200 high school teams participate.

From Performing Arts Director Michael LaCava: The WHS Performing Arts Department is proud to announce that **10 WHS students** were selected for the All-State Musical Ensemble for 2019. The musicians auditioned with approximately 950 students from across Massachusetts for one of the positions in the All-State ensembles. Being a member of these ensembles is the highest honor for a high school music student in Massachusetts. Selected students will perform at Symphony Hall in Boston on March 2nd. Congratulations to all of the students involved and also to the faculty members who assisted the students in preparing for these auditions.

From Visual Arts Director Thom Carter: Congratulations to the **high school and middle school art staff and their students** for an amazing showing at the Boston Globe Scholastics Awards. This is the state-wide competition that leads to the national competition – the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, which is the nation's largest, longest-running and most prestigious visual and literary arts program recognizing creative accomplishments of students in grades 7 through 12.

From WPS Principals: Thank you to all **WPS nurses** who are committed to supporting the physical and mental health of our students and staff, especially at this time of year.

Also from WPS Principals: Thank you to **Michael LaCava** for the enormous amount of work and outstanding leadership centered around Standards Based Report Card. The

work on the new progress report has been excellent, comprehensive and on point. His work is appreciated by administrators and teachers alike.

From Director of Early Childhood 'Becca Zieminski: Thank you to the **PAWS teachers and specialists** who collaborated with her to write the preschool standards based report cards.

From Fiske Principal Rachel McGregor: Congratulations to **Fiske Music Teacher Julie Verret** for performing the Marcello Oboe Concerto with the WHS Orchestra on Thursday, January 31st.

From Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Joan Dabrowski: Thanks to our **WHS Translation Club** who recently translated all of our Welcome Packet information for families who attend the annual K-Roundups. Documents are now available in Chinese, Spanish and Korean. Thanks to the student and parent members of the Translation Club!

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Chow wished all a **Happy Chinese New Year**. She reported the **Committee's webpage** has been updated and asked members to review it and provide feedback.

Ms. Martin reported she and Ms. Chow attended the **Schofield PTO meeting**. There was great conversation and interest in the budget, its drivers, investments being considered, and how the budget affects staff and students. She thanked the SBC for the **Hunnewell community forum** held on January 29th, which was an excellent session of interesting conversation and feedback.

Ms. Gray reported she and Mr. Kelley attended the **Hunnewell PTO meeting** and discussed the tentative shortlist of options for the school, progress on the feasibility study, and budget issues. Ms. Gray also attended the recent **Wellesley Green Collaborative** which is a quarterly meeting of environmentally minded organizations discussing sustainability and green initiatives in Wellesley. This meeting addressed transportation, specifically as it relates to schools. She enjoyed hearing from the Lexington Safe Routes To School representative on how this group increased ridership at the high school level in Lexington.

Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. provided an update on the **softball field project**. The architects, Weston & Sampson, and representatives from the DPW and the Playing Fields Task Force discussed with the NRC reasons to rebuild the field in its current location and reviewed potential designs. The NRC was supportive of this recommendation and the architect's plan to finalize the designs within the next month or so. Once the final design is received, it will be presented to constituent groups, and then presented to the Annual Town Meeting for funding. Regarding the **lacrosse wall**, the final plan should be coming soon, and there will be neighborhood outreach and discussion with the Facilities Management Department. A copy of the plan will be provided to the Committee and Dr. Lussier when its ready.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lussier informed the Committee that the first **Kindergarten Roundup** for the 2019-20 school year is scheduled for Wednesday, February 6th, from 3 to 6 pm, at the Sprague Library. There is a neighborhood meeting scheduled regarding the **WMS piping project** on February 7th to provide neighbors with an overview of the project, an estimated timetable for the work and impact to the area. Dr. Lussier also reported he will be holding his quarterly meeting with **PTO Presidents** on Friday, February 8th.

Dr. Lussier addressed emails that have been received recently regarding **job shares**. He explained that job shares are a type of leave that were never meant to be permanent, and about a year ago, it was decided to formally limit them to 2 years' duration. Job shares are challenging for a number of reasons including increased costs of health benefits, 'bumping rights' when a job share ends, and the decline in elementary enrollment. Job shares will continue to be considered as specific requests arise.

Mr. Kelley noted that the Committee has received, but has not responded to, emails regarding job shares. He does not believe Human Resources issues and decisions are under the Committee's purview. The Committee asked clarifying questions and after a discussion, agreed that job sharing is an operational issue and the responsibility of the Superintendent and his staff. Mr. Kelley will respond to the emails received indicating that this issue is not under the Committee's purview and is in support of the Superintendent's decision.

CONSENT AGENDA

After a brief discussion and an amendment proposed by Mr. D'Ortenzio on the January 15, 2019 minutes, upon a motion made by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. D'Ortenzio, Jr., the Committee **VOTED** to approve the January 15, 2019 minutes as amended. The vote was 4 in favor; 0 against; 1 abstention.

After a brief discussion, upon a motion made by Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee **unanimously VOTED** to approve the Consent Agenda including the January 16, 2019 Open Session minutes and the Trip Approval Form for the Jazz Band Festival in Connecticut.

Approval of the January 16, 2019 Executive Session minutes was deferred pending review at an upcoming Executive Session.

FY20 BUDGET

After a brief discussion, upon a motion made by Ms. Martin and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee **unanimously VOTED** to approve an FY20 Operating Budget of \$76,938,818 with an additional \$250,000 of anticipated health benefit costs. The total FY20 Operating budget of \$77,188,818 represents a 3.65 percent increase over the FY19 Operating budget.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Martin and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee **unanimously VOTED** to approve the FY20 Capital Budget totaling \$1,101,028 inclusive of Fixtures, Furniture, Equipment and Technology to send to Town Meeting.

The Committee expressed its appreciation to Dr. Lussier and his administration for their many hours of work in the preparation of a responsible budget that meets the District's needs and goals. The WPS FY20 budget will be presented to the Advisory Committee on Wednesday, February 6th.

K-5 STANDARDS BASED REPORT CARDS UPDATE

Dr. Dabrowski and Performing Arts Director Michael LaCava provided the Committee with an update on the Standards Based Report Card (SBRC) project. Dr. Dabrowski distributed current and previous versions of report cards, and provided history on the project. She indicated the current report card is not aligned with State standards or with WPS curriculum; it is difficult to be specific about what students know and are able to do; there is difficulty with sharing what students need to work on to meet grade level standards; and there is inconsistent reporting across the district. She reviewed the SBRC goal which is to clearly communicate student progress and performance toward Massachusetts grade level standards and expectations to both students and families. Dr. Dabrowski reported a number of meetings have been held since September 2018 with classroom teachers, specialists, principals to develop a report card in line with the SBRC goal.

Mr. LaCava reviewed the sample report cards used in other districts, discussing the various formats.

Dr. Dabrowski then reviewed where the work currently stands including the development of the WPS SBRC template. Mr. LaCava reviewed draft sections of the SBRC draft in various subject areas, noting that there will still be a place for individual feedback. Next steps were reviewed including final prep work for implementation, including parent engagement, professional development for teachers, presentation to the Committee in May for approval and introduction to all K-5 educators in June.

It is hoped to have a version 1.0 of the K-5 SBRC in all schools for the 2019-20 school year. During 2019-20, there will be additional consideration of new state standards in social studies, digital literacy and computer science, which will then be incorporated, along with feedback from staff and parents on version 1.0.

The Committee asked clarifying questions and commended Dr. Dabrowski and Mr. LaCava for their thoughtful work on this project.

RECENT 40B ACTIVITY

The Committee addressed its role relative to the 40B projects near school properties. There are concerns with student safety in travelling to and from school, and environmental issues that may affect student learning and their time outdoors on school grounds.

After some discussion, it was decided that Mr. Kelley will prepare a letter to the Zoning Board of Appeal asking that, when evaluating such projects, they keep in mind the safe transit of students to and from school, and impact on the educational environment. In particular, student safety considerations should be considered in the scheduling of blasting and in mapping out truck routes near school areas.

Dr. Lussier suggested it may be useful to have all stakeholders in the room to address concerns from all constituencies and advocate for specific interests. This was done with the developer for the Wellesley Office Park project and is a good model to follow for these projects.

Mr. D'Ortenzio, Jr. proposed following up with the Selectmen about a previous proposal to purchase a parcel of land near Sprague Field for improved traffic flow and additional parking. This was addressed by the PFTF in a letter to the Selectmen last year and Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. recommended it should be followed up on to see if it should be pursued. The Committee agreed and Mr. Kelley and Ms. Martin will speak with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Selectmen to see if there is interest in exploring the idea further.

The Committee is supportive of Mr. Kelley sending a letter to the ZBA outlining Committee interest with regard to student safety. In addition, there should be follow-up with the Selectmen about potentially acquiring a portion of the Sterns Road parcel, and follow-up with the Planning Department about having a broader, multi-departmental conversation on these projects.

STRATEGIC PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SPAC) UPDATE

Dr. Lussier provided an update on the progress of the Strategic Plan Advisory Committee. He distributed two documents: the SPAC SWOT Summary which provides a listing of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats relating to the Strategic Plan; and the Evaluation of the Strategic Plan for 2013-19. He reviewed the elements of the updated work plan starting with internal visioning, strategic development, external engagement and then approval of the strategic plan. Ms. Chow discussed the work done on the SWOT analysis. Dr. Lussier then reviewed the strategies for the plan, which are similar to the previous version. Ms. Martin discussed process, specifically on receiving community input through various forums that have already taken place including the racial climate assessment, development of the Profile of a Graduate, and feedback from SPAC that they believe there have been many requests of community members in the recent past for input. Dr. Lussier hopes to have a finalized plan by June and expected publication in the fall.

Mr. Kelley asked that the plan be as specific as possible relative to budget implications of initiatives. Perhaps a cost evaluation of all those items driven by the current Strategic Plan could also be prepared.

HUNNEWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Dr. Lussier discussed the draft Hunnewell Educational Program that has been created to inform the Hunnewell feasibility project and will also serve as a model for the Hardy/Upham project. He acknowledged all those administrators who contributed to the

report in their respective domains. Dr. Lussier solicited the Committee's comments and indicated there will be a need for a Committee vote on the document. Ms. Gray indicated that SBC expects the Committee's formal approval of the document to help inform its work. Members are asked to provide Dr. Lussier with their individual feedback/questions and plan for a vote on February 26th.

Ms. Gray provided a number of issues she feels should be addressed in the educational plan including the deficiency regarding some student services being provided in hallways; a notation that it is intentional that teachers travel to classrooms for the FLES curriculum; ensuring appropriate learning spaces for special education students and staff; and addressing how the building will adapt to future changes in technology.

Ms. Gray distributed and reviewed a document related to space summary, including square footage and specific space proposals for the Hunnewell School as it relates to the educational plan.

HUNNEWELL AND HARDY/UPHAM PROJECTS UPDATE

Hunnewell School

Ms. Gray reviewed adjustments made to short list of options at its last meeting. She reported the SBC has decided on four options: addition/renovation with the tree; addition/renovation without the tree; new building with the tree and new building without the tree. She reviewed the options with the most recent recommended changes from the architect. The options will be developed further and presented to the SBC on February 27th.

Ms. Gray also reviewed parking options including a review of the existing parking areas, and proposals including parking underneath Hunnewell; using a portion of the Cameron Street lot for staff parking; and the addition of a deck to the Cameron Street lot.

Swing space options were discussed, noting the Committee's desire to find options that are the least disruptive to students. Ms. Gray reviewed what has been considered to date, including alternate sites of St. Paul and the Village Churches, which are not viable; placing modulars on the Hunnewell School property or on the Cameron Street lot will not work; scattering students around town is not supported; placing modulars at other school sites is being considered, and the last option is waiting until the Hardy/Upham project is complete. The concept of modular classrooms on school sites is being considered, with the most spacious sites being Sprague and Schofield, and Sprague being the closest school to Hunnewell. The architects are developing the idea of modulars on a single site or on two sites. Ms. Gray stressed these are just concepts that are being developed. No decisions have been made. She reviewed the areas where the modulars could potentially be placed on each site. Before any decision is made, these concepts must be fully developed including a review costs, student experience, space, busing, traffic, and parking.

Hardy/Upham Project

Ms. Chow removed herself from the table at 9:39 pm

Ms. Gray reported the Selectmen voted on Attachment A that is being submitted to the MSBA which will be considering the SBC's selection of Compass Management for the Hardy/Upham Project OPM.

Ms. Chow rejoined meeting 9:40 pm

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Buhler thanked the Committee for its comments regarding the 40B projects and appreciate the Committee's willingness to send a letter to the ZBA expressing concerns with student safety. He also provided additional concerns with the 40B project located near his home.

Holly Grace, new resident on Bristol Road, indicated she likes the new report card format and would like to see an increase in frequency of receiving report cards. She indicated finding information and updates on the Upham/Hardy projects has been difficult for her and suggested the information is made more accessible and up to date. She indicated she is unhappy with the job share proposal and is concerned with the single section of Kindergarten at Upham.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 9:50 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 Budget Update Sheet
SBRC Memo & Presentation
SPAC Updated Work Plan
SPAC Evaluation of Current Strategic Plan
SPAC Updated SWOT Summary 1-30-19
SPAC 1-30-19 Meeting Slides
Hunnewell Ed Program
Add-Reno Construction Summary – Hunnewell Space 2/1/19
New Construction Summary – Hunnewell Space 2/1/19