

**Wellesley Public Schools  
School Committee Meeting  
June 9, 2020  
Remote Online Meeting**

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, Assistant Superintendents Joan Dabrowski and Cindy Mahr; Student Services Director Sarah Orlov; and Student Advisory representatives Rachel White and Violet Lahive.

Ms. Martin announced that the meeting is being held remotely and recorded by local media and broadcast live by Wellesley Media.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** There were no callers.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Gray reported that she and Mr. Kelley held an **office hours** session on Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. There were two callers, both of whom wanted to discuss remote learning and the challenges of the past three months. A WPS Science teacher provided feedback about her concerns with student accountability while they are learning remotely. Ms. Gray also reported the PBC will be discussing the **Hunnewell project** in its next meeting on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>.

Committee members congratulated the **high school seniors** who graduated on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Chisum and his entire staff, as well as the administration and Town departments were recognized for all the work that was put into the coordination of this great community-wide event.

Ms. Martin recognized that this is **Mr. Kelley's final School Committee meeting**. She thanked him for his continued service, especially over the last few months which was unexpected!

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Lussier acknowledged **Dr. Chisum and his team, the Police and Fire Departments, Health Department, Babson College, the PTSO and all the parent volunteers** who were involved in creating such a great event for this year's high school seniors. He also acknowledged the many community members who lined the streets of Wellesley to honor this year's graduates during the parade. It was a successful day overall!

Dr. Lussier announced that Phase 2 of the Governor's re-opening plan includes **fields and playgrounds** which are in the process of being opened in Wellesley. Timing will be determined by when the signs are installed at each site. He suggested residents check the Town's daily updates which will include a more specific timeline for the openings.

Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> is the **last day of remote learning** for students, and Wednesday is the last remote day for teachers.

**The Town election** is scheduled for Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>. Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Dr. Lussier reported he has been holding remote end of year check ins with the PTO presidents. He is looking forward to his continued work with PTOs, and especially during 2020-21 when their partnership will be even more essential.

### **STUDENT ADVISORY**

Ms. White reported she has heard that students are concerned about how learning will be implemented for the 2020-21 school year. Ms. Lahive thanked the Committee and Dr. Lussier for all the effort that went into creating such a great graduation day for seniors.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the May 26, 2020 open session minutes as presented.

**MOVED:** Mr. Kelley; **SECONDED:** Ms. Chow; **ROLL CALL:** Mr. Kelley – Yes; Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Mr. Roberti – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes.  
**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY:** Yes – 5; No – 0

Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the New England Medical Invoice WELLS1912 as presented.

**MOVED:** Mr. Kelley; **SECONDED:** Ms. Chow; **ROLL CALL:** Mr. Kelley – Yes; Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Mr. Roberti – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes.  
**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY:** Yes – 5; No – 0

### **GRADE 5 WOW EQUITY PROJECT RECOGNITION**

The Committee was joined by Dr. Dabrowski and Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Charmie Curry, Library and Innovations Department Head Toni Carlson, PreK-5 Department Head for ELA and Social Studies Jenn Friedman and World of Wellesley President Michelle Chalmers to present this year's WOW Grade 5 equity project.

Ms. Chalmers reviewed the goal of the project which was for grade 5 students to think, act and express themselves in relationship to the WPS Core Values and to the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Dabrowski reviewed the three prompts presented to students and the various formats that could be used including a written essay, a spoken personal essay, e.g., video or podcast, or a visual or performance artwork, e.g., drawing, painting, sculpture, video, song dance). The names of the 90 students who submitted a project were read aloud and they were congratulated for their work. Students will receive certificates through the US mail.

Once the projects have been vetted and permission to post received, these projects will be available on the District's website.

After questions, the Committee congratulated the students who participated and thanked all who were involved in taking a challenging situation and making it a teachable moment.

#### **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS CONTRACT RENEWAL**

Dr. Lussier reminded the Committee that members of the administration who are not part of a bargaining unit receive professional contracts for the first three years of employment, and then multiple-year contracts after that time. One of the contracts that requires School Committee approval is the position of Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations. Dr. Lussier is pleased to bring forward to the Committee his recommendation to approve a one-year contract for Cindy Mahr to continue serving as the WPS Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations for SY2020-21. It was noted that the salary as written in the contract has not been adjusted to reflect the salary for FY21, but will be revised once the Committee votes on the non-union salary schedule for the upcoming year.

Ms. Martin entertained a motion to renew the contract with Assistant Superintendent Cynthia Mahr as distributed, including a one-year term, with salary currently at \$163,200 which will be adjusted to the sum voted by the School Committee on the non-union salary schedule for the time period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

**MOVED:** Mr. Kelley; **SECONDED:** Ms. Gray; **ROLL CALL:** Mr. Kelley – Yes; Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Mr. Roberti – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY:** Yes – 5; No – 0

The Committee thanked Ms. Mahr for her continued service to the Committee and the community.

#### **STUDENT ENROLLMENT UPDATE**

Ms. Mahr provided an update on enrollment for school year 2020-21. She reviewed the budgeted elementary sections for FY20 and FY21, which were 107 and 105, respectively. Currently, FY21 has 104 sections. Elementary class size guidelines were reviewed for each grade level, with 51 sections below guideline and 53 at guideline. Open enrollment was reviewed with 25 applications received. One application was withdrawn and one was incomplete and not considered. Of the 23 applications that remained, 19 were approved for placement, 13 have accepted, 3 are pending a decision, 2 declined and 1 withdrew. It was noted that this is the first year where rising siblings of students in specialized programs do not need to go through the open enrollment process and are placed automatically. Current enrollment for FY20-21, both projected and current numbers, were reviewed. Elementary enrollment is down by 52 students from the projected number. It was noted that there are 36 children identified in the Town census as eligible for kindergarten but have not registered, deferred or identified as private/parochial. She expects this number will shift in the next few weeks.

Ms. Gray noted the connection between the declining enrollment numbers and the Town's plan for elementary schools. The decline is indicative of what has been occurring over the last 12 years with a loss of over 400 elementary students during that time, illustrating there are not enough students for seven elementary schools at this time. Projections for the next ten years also show this continued pattern.

## **SCHOOL REOPENING PLANNING**

### **General Update**

Dr. Lussier reported that late Friday districts received the DESE listing of PPE required for districts to purchase for the opening of schools in the fall. DESE also provided some additional detail on what school openings will look like, which raised a number of questions over the weekend among districts and in the public, and received attention in the news media. A memo was received today from DESE suggesting that the previous email relating to possible restrictions in classrooms should not be considered too closely, as the recommendations will be changing over the next few weeks.

### **Financial Update**

Ms. Mahr provided an overview of the department's financial status, noting savings in salary, as well as in inclusion services, transportation, athletics, translation, and art, totaling \$1 - 1.2 million in savings in FY20. She reported that legislation has now been signed regarding the partial payment of transportation services for intown routes, METCO routes and van routes which will also result in savings and ensure continued transportation services in the fall. Based on this legislation, payments can now be made to the District's transportation services, but will require a vote of the School Committee, Board of Selectmen and approval by the Town's Finance officer.

Ms. Mahr then summarized the proposed technology purchases by faculty, staff and students, the number of devices needed and the number of devices that must be purchased. These devices are anticipated to cost approximately \$960,130, with \$435,630 funded through cash capital, leaving an unfunded balance of \$524,500.

### **Technology/PPE**

Ms. Dooley reviewed device need by faculty and staff, as well as for the youngest learner in preK-2 who do not have 1:1 devices. Dr. Dabrowski discussed that it was unanimous among the elementary leadership team that if some form of remote learning will be continuing into the fall, it is necessary to make devices available to the District's youngest learners.

Ms. Mahr reviewed funding options for the technology purchases including an amendment to the METCO grant allowing the movement of unexpended funds into an instructional technology account; use of the Pre-school Revolving Fund for the significant number of devices targeted to support the PAWS Program of \$62,500; leaving a balance of \$412,000. Some options to address this balance include use of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), totaling \$123,000, that was received by the district to be used in FY20 or FY21; use of the Federal CARES Act funding to the Town of \$2.6 million for COVID-related uses; or end of year operating budget funds. Ms. Mahr is in conversations with Town partners on the best approach for this funding.

The Committee was joined by Nursing Department Head Linda Corridan who addressed PPE needs and costs. She reviewed DESE's guidance of June 5<sup>th</sup> for required items as well as the status of items that she has ordered and are already in the building or on back order including disposable gloves and masks, reusable masks with clear panels, face shields, disposable gowns and hand sanitizer. She noted that although both adult and pediatric masks are being purchased, staff and students will be expected to bring their own masks. Masks will be available if personal ones are broken or lost. Infrared thermometers have also been purchased to take temperatures before entering the building. Ms. Corridan indicated the anticipated cost is between \$75,000 and \$100,000 for PPE. In addition to PPE, there is a requirement that an isolation room is identified in each school building, separate from the nurse's office and must have a window. In addition, there will be a need to identify a safe and secure location to store all of the PPE materials in stock.

Ms. Mahr also addressed the need for plexiglass between office staff and the public in each building. She is working with the Facilities Management Department to determine where those panels need to be installed.

Ms. Mahr indicated the Town has asked that action on funding sources be delayed for one week to continue to consider the Schools' needs as well as the Town's needs and determine the best path forward.

After questions and discussion, the Committee thanked the team for their continued efforts.

#### **Resolution on State Funding Relative to COVID-19 Expenses**

Ms. Martin informed the Committee that a number of school committees in the area are considering a resolution regarding full state reimbursement of COVID-19 expenses following DESE's guidance for school reopening in the fall. The draft resolution was previously provided to the Committee for review.

After some discussion and a review of the resolution narrative, the Committee agreed to adopt the resolution recognizing that the potential mandates will be quite costly and will financially impact some districts more than others.

Ms. Martin entertained a motion to endorse the resolution regarding state funding of COVID-19 expenses.

**MOVED:** Mr. Kelley; **SECONDED:** Ms. Gray; **ROLL CALL:** Mr. Kelley – Yes; Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes.; Mr. Roberti - Yes  
**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY:** Yes – 5; No – 0

**PUBLIC COMMENT** There were no callers.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At approximately 8:45 pm, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session under MGL c. 30A § 22 to review minutes from the June 2, 2020 Executive Session and also under MGL c. 30A, §21(A), exemption # 2 for the purposes of discussing strategy with respect to negotiations with all non-union employees except Superintendent David Lussier and to invite into Executive Session Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent Cindy Mahr, and Director of Human Resources Gayle McCracken and not to reconvene in Open Session after the conclusion of the Executive Session.

**MOVED:** Mr. Kelley; **SECONDED:** Ms. Gray; **ROLL CALL:** Mr. Kelley – Yes; Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes.; Mr. Roberti - Yes

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY:** Yes – 5; No – 0

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gray  
Secretary

**Documents and Exhibits Used:**

SC Meeting Agenda/Posting – June 9, 2020

Draft Minutes 5/26/20

New England Medical invoice

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations contract

WPS Presentation – COVID-19 update

Draft Resolution on State Funding for COVID-19 expenses