

**Wellesley Public Schools  
School Committee Meeting  
June 16, 2020  
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. Those present included Chair Melissa Martin, Vice Chair Linda Chow, members Sharon Gray, Jim Roberti and Catherine Mirick; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendents Joan Dabrowski and Cindy Mahr; Human Resources Director Gayle McCracken; 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.

**WELCOME**

The Committee welcomed Ms. Catherine Mirick as the newest member of the School Committee and congratulated Ms. Martin on her re-election.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** There were no callers.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Chow announced the PFTF met on June 12<sup>th</sup> and she had the following updates: The **Sprague turf fields** are virtually completed, with just a short punch list remaining; the **lacrosse wall proposal** is scheduled to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals in a few weeks; and the proposal regarding **bathrooms for the fields** near the Aqueduct and the high school stadium will need further review. With regard to the bathrooms, the plan was to place the custom container type toilets near the Aqueduct fields and if they were successful in that location, they would also be used at the stadium. However, DPW did not receive any bids for this work. The discussion has now reverted back to the use of the high-end mobile bathrooms and possibly decoupling the two projects. A joint meeting is being proposed with the Schools and NRC for next month to discuss the options available for these locations.

Ms. Chow and other Committee members continue to be impressed and inspired by the activism by past and present WPS students around **Black Lives Matter**, and student-led events that have been organized including Wake Up Wellesley which is a panel-style discussion on YouTube that provides members of the black community an opportunity to share their experiences about racism in the community. In addition, a Black Lives Matter: Wellesley Forward, event is being held this week and facilitates a discussion among citizens, Police and the Schools.

Ms. Martin reported the **WMS building systems project** went to the Design Review Board (DRB) on June 10<sup>th</sup> and had a successful review by that board. The DRB focuses on exterior work that can affect the neighborhood views of the building. Ms. Martin had mentioned holding a **short Committee meeting** next Tuesday night for the Committee to reorganize, etc., at the completion of Town Meeting. Since it appears that Town Meeting may go beyond one night, members will be polled to determine the best time to hold this final meeting next week.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Lussier announced that today was the **last day of school** for students, marking the end of a most unique year with extraordinary challenges that will likely carry forward into the next school year.

Dr. Lussier acknowledged receiving a number of communications from WHS alumnae and current students expressing their strong desire for Wellesley Public Schools to remain fully engaged in conversations around **race and diversity**. Dr. Lussier believes that WPS plays a unique role as an educational institution that supports student learning and growth, and wanting to empower students to be engaged in these critical issues. He is pleased that students are challenging the administration to think about continued progress in the schools and ensuring that WPS is a welcoming community for all students and families. While a great deal has been done, Dr. Lussier said there is still work to do and there is a powerful momentum within the community to look at these issues and to do better. He looks forward to partnering with all community stakeholders to listen and address these issues. Dr. Lussier referenced a session being held this evening with stakeholders, and another session scheduled for 2 pm on Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, which will include representation from the Schools, Police and other community leaders, as well as any community members who wish to participate in having open and honest dialogue on these important issues.

Dr. Lussier reported that all presentations for **Annual Town Meeting** were submitted last week. One school-related question was received regarding special education funding. There will be an opportunity to respond to questions on Thursday evening. Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **STUDENT ADVISORY**

Ms. White introduced the new **Student Advisory representatives** to the School Committee for SY2020-21 - **Grace Bida, Ian Lei, Kate Bhatt – and she will continue as a Student Advisory rep.** Ms. White, as well as Ms. Bida, Mr. Lei and Ms. Bhatt briefly addressed the Committee.

Ms. Lahive indicated that students have planned a number of events to educate the community on **racial inequalities** and she believes that students will continue having conversations and are invested on improving race relations in WPS. Students appreciate the Administration's help and ask that this support continues.

School Committee welcomed the new student representatives and thanked Ms. White and Ms. Lahive for their thoughtful advocacy and contributions to School Committee this year. Ms. Lahive was congratulated on her graduation from Wellesley High School.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the June 2, 2020 Open Session minutes as presented to the Committee this evening.

**MOVED:** Ms. Gray; **SECONDED:** Ms. Chow; **ROLL CALL:** Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Mr. Roberti – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick - Abstained  
**MOTION CARRIED:** Yes – 4; No – 0; Abstention – 1.

Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the balance of the Consent Agenda which includes the surplus declaration for the WMS library table and chairs and the Hunnewell library books.

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

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **ELECTION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICER**

Ms. Martin explained that with Matt Kelley having completed his service, the Committee needed to elect a new secretary. Typically, the newly elected member takes on the role of Secretary during reorganization in June. The new member would normally have three months of time on the Committee prior to taking on this role. Since elections just occurred, it was decided to elect a secretary to serve for a few months, anticipating that the new member would take over the role after having some time to settle in.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to elect Sharon Gray as the School Committee Secretary.

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

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **SCHOOL REOPENING PLANNING**

##### **General**

Dr. Lussier reported he expects to be hearing from DESE some time this week on guidance for next year's school opening. He will keep the Committee apprised.

##### **Technology Purchases**

Ms. Mahr reviewed previous discussions on this topic including the number of devices to be purchased and related unbudgeted costs, identifying possible funds under the Committee's control that can be applied towards these costs. Ms. Mahr informed the Committee that after discussions with the Town's Chief Financial Officer, the Town has offered funding from the CARES Act which provides funds for purchases related to COVID-19, to purchase the needed devices. Ms. Mahr reviewed the process to be used in placing orders using funds from this year's Schools general fund, and then transferring to CARES Act money once the books are closed out for the year. It was noted that when previously presenting the overall closeout for FY20, a \$1 million turnback was being projected, and there was a proposal to use some of these funds to cover the \$500,000 of unbudgeted technology purchases. With the inclusion of the CARES Act funding, the full \$1 million will be returned to the Town.

After a discussion, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to authorize the purchase of the additional technology devices as presented at the June 9, 2020 School Committee meeting.

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

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**FY20 Transportation Amendment**

Ms. Mahr explained that due to concerns from districts across the state of the potential impact of the pandemic on the availability of student transportation in the fall, which is already challenging to secure during normal times, the districts, school transportation companies, Department of Revenue, DESE and State legislature collaborated to negotiate a reduced daily rate to ensure that drivers continue to be employed and vehicle leases are paid. On June 5, 2020, Governor Baker signed “An Act Relative to Municipal Governance During the COVID-19 Emergency”. Section 12 of the Act allows a town to make payment for education-related contracted services entered into by the school committee to maintain the availability of and access to the services previously contracted by the school committee. Town Counsel has prepared the agreements that meet the requirements of this section. The agreements must be approved by the School Committee, Town Accountant, and Board of Selectmen. Provided the Committee approves the contracts, they will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for action. Ms. Mahr indicated funds are encumbered for this purpose, with the unused balance to be returned to the Town.

After a discussion and questions, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the Amendment to the Agreement between Wellesley Public Schools and Eastern Bus Company, dated June 10, 2020, and to authorize the Chair to sign the Amendment and Attachment A: Transportation Service Provider Sworn Statement on behalf of the Committee.

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

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

After a discussion and questions, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the Amendment to the Agreement between Wellesley Public Schools and JSC Transportation Service, Inc. dated June 10, 2020, and to authorize the Chair to sign the Amendment and Attachment A: Transportation Service Provider Sworn Statement on behalf of the Committee.

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

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Targeted Summer Support**

Dr. Dabrowski provided an update on the continued work to recover from this year and provide continuity of service for students who may need ongoing support, particularly in the areas of reading and math. She indicated that department heads and principals identified those students who would benefit from continued support over the summer with their reading and math specialists. Families of students who would qualify for this targeted support have been surveyed and have expressed overwhelming interest in having their students receive this support. This would apply to rising first to fifth graders. Over 100 students will begin this 4-week program the week of July 6<sup>th</sup> with very targeted intervention in math and reading. Similar to the Extended School Year program, it will

run Monday through Thursday, but is more of a small group or individual tutoring opportunity, not a full day of study, to help mitigate any type of summer loss in reading and math.

Dr. Dabrowski is also working through details with Middle and High School colleagues to implement a similar program, with a shorter 3-week program, also targeted in reading and math.

This program is seen as an extension of the school year, rather than a new program, and they are working to have the same teachers that the students had during the school year to continue in this summer.

Dr. Lussier indicated they are currently identifying resources for the program, and hope to use the District's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds as the mechanism to help support this work over the summer.

After a discussion and questions, the Committee recognized Dr. Dabrowski and her team for considering the needs of all students and for the ability to pivot to provide such support.

#### **NON-UNION SALARY INCREASES**

Ms. McCracken reviewed the process that is used to consider salary increases for non-union employees. She noted that the increase being proposed is 2 percent for most positions, with some increases being more based on a market survey of certain positions.

Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the FY21 Non-Union Salary Increases as presented.

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

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

Ms. Martin thanked Ms. McCracken for her work in ensuring that salaries are competitive.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION AND MERIT PAY INCREASE**

Ms. Martin reviewed the process used in evaluating the Superintendent, which starts with the development of goals at the beginning of the school year and culminates with the preparation of individual evaluations by each Committee member which are then compiled into a summative evaluation that is presented in a public forum. Ms. Martin read the summary evaluation section of the form which provides the thoughts and reflections of the Committee on the Superintendent's work, for which he received an overall evaluation score of Proficient.

Each member expressed their appreciation for Dr. Lussier's leadership, breadth of work and strong work ethic.

Dr. Lussier thanked the Committee for the generous comments, but went on to acknowledge his extraordinary team of colleagues, all of whom have major roles in getting this important work done.

After discussion, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the Superintendent's summative evaluation for the 2019-2020 school year as presented.

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

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

After a brief discussion, Ms. Martin then entertained a motion to approve a 2.0 percent merit salary increase for the Superintendent, effective July 1, 2020.

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

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **SUPERINTENDENT VACATION CARRYOVER**

Dr. Lussier is requesting a carryover of ten days into FY21.

Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the Superintendent's request to carry over ten vacation days into FY21.

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

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

The Committee strongly encouraged Dr. Lussier to take much-needed vacation time to recharge.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES REVIEW FOR RELEASE**

Dr. Lussier and Ms. Martin reviewed the Executive Session minutes and concurred that there are no executive session minutes that should be released at this time.

#### **HHU UPDATE**

##### **Hardy/Upham**

Ms. Chow removed herself from the conversation at 8:18 pm and returned at 8:28 pm.

Ms. Gray reported that the residents voted No on the non-binding referendum question asking whether there should be 7 elementary schools versus 6, with 59 percent voting against the referendum. There is still much work to be done in this multi-year project. Ms. Gray encouraged the community to continue to remain engaged and participate in the process.

Mr. Roberti indicated it is important to be cognizant of any changes that need to be made on both projects, either on a temporary or permanent basis, due to the effects from the pandemic.

Dr. Lussier reported there was a meeting today on fixtures, furnishings and equipment (FF&E) for the Hunnewell project, and there was a conversation relative to the type of furniture that would be needed to accommodate social distancing if and when needed.

Ms. Gray also reported the School Building Committee is working towards a recommendation on the building site. The SBC is planning to resume discussions on July 30<sup>th</sup>, with some additional work to be done on traffic and revised cost estimates. The SBC expects to continue meetings in August and September, with a community forum also scheduled for September. The SBC will be making a recommendation in September, after discussions with the School Committee and Board of Selectmen to reach consensus. October 27<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for submitting the Town's preferred solution to the MSBA.

Ms. Gray noted that the COVID crisis has pushed back the schedule for both buildings, with Hunnewell slated to open in 2024 and the Hardy/Upham school opening sometime in 2025.

A third community forum on the feasibility study has yet to be scheduled, but until then, community members are encouraged to engage both via email and by providing feedback at SBC meetings.

### **Hunnewell**

Ms. Gray reported that the PBC met last week and discussed the Hunnewell School project, with the focus on technical details, commissioning, and selecting a construction manager.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** There were no callers.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At approximately 8:35 pm, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session under MGL C30A, Section 22, to review minutes from the June 9, 2020 Executive Session and to invite into Executive Session Superintendent David Lussier, and Assistant Superintendent Cindy Mahr; and not to reconvene in Open Session after the conclusion of the Executive Session.

**MOVED:** Mr. Roberti; **SECONDED:** Ms. Gray; **ROLL CALL:** Ms. Mirick – 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 16, 2020

Draft Minutes 6/9/20

Memos – Surplus Declarations: WMS Library & Chairs  
Hunnewell Library Books

Agreement w/Eastern Bus

Agreement w/JSC

FY21 Salary Scales – NonUnion

Superintendent Summative Evaluation