

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
June 25, 2020
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM. Those present included Chair Melissa Martin, Vice Chair Linda Chow, Secretary Sharon Gray, members Jim Roberti and Catherine Mirick; and Superintendent David Lussier.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Loretta Carranza, parent of two WPS students expressed her concern with the possibility of continuing remote learning in the fall. She does not feel it is ideal for most children, and it is more challenging for those with learning disabilities. In addition, she believes there should be more synchronous learning time and she does not feel that remote learning addresses the needs of students with IEPs, especially as it relates to providing in-person services during the extended school year.

Kerry Locke Bedard, parent of a WPS student, hopes that there will be a forum provided where there will be an opportunity to discuss the guidelines that were announced by the DESE earlier in the day and learn more about how the District will address them. With regard to the fall reopening, she hopes there will be more live learning, more rigor, better feedback from teachers to students, curriculum transparency and also better communication with the parents. In addition, she hopes there will be opportunity for parental input on how remote learning can be improved.

Rebecca Burstein, parent of a WPS student as well as a private school student, expressed concern that her child was interacting with District-level staff in recorded lessons rather than having live sessions with school-specific specialists. She encouraged the Committee to do everything possible to get students into schools in the fall. She requested more live instruction time with school-specific teachers and specialists, enforcement of minimum teaching standards, and that teachers are encouraged to be flexible and customize their programming.

Joanne McIntosh, parent of an incoming high school freshman and 7th grade student, provided observations of her children's remote learning experiences, noting what she felt was a wide variance in the quality of lessons and materials among teachers. She felt the lessons seemed unstructured and there was too much time spent playing games online. Ms. McIntosh suggested that teacher feedback should be more consistent, and hoped there is a desire to replicate the same educational experience remotely as what occurs in the classroom. She also wondered if educational curriculum and lessons can be shared with parents so they can be partners in this journey.

Tanya Lisowsky, parent of two elementary students, expressed her concern with the minimal live instruction provided by classroom teachers and specialists during the spring remote learning session. She also addressed the difficulty of dual-working parents spending hours each day facilitating learning, especially for those with young learners. She mentioned the issue of equity among families who can afford private

tutors to supplement remote learning work with private tutors versus those who are not able to do this, and she expressed her concern with the lack of support for children on IEPs. She urged the Committee and Superintendent to re-evaluate remote learning for the fall in hopes of addressing these topics.

FAREWELL TO COLLEAGUES/INTRODUCTION OF NEW ADMINISTRATORS

Dr. Lussier and Dr. Chisum recognized Marc Bender who is leaving WHS to take on his first principalship in Norwell and introduced Collin Shattuck who will be the new Assistant Principal. Mr. Shattuck is returning to WHS where he was previously a special educator and basketball coach for 7 years. Dr. Lussier then recognized Charlene Cook who is retiring as the Hardy School principal after 7 years in the position, and welcomed Grant Smith as the new principal of Hardy School.

School Committee thanked Ms. Cook and Mr. Bender for their service to Wellesley Public Schools and wished them well in their next chapter. The Committee also congratulated Mr. Smith and Mr. Shattuck on their new roles in the Wellesley Public Schools.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Mirick indicated she is impressed with the **WPS Summer Learning** section of the District website and the material available for students of all ages.

Ms. Chow reported a joint meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 16th to discuss the **bathroom options** near the high school stadium. She will confirm once the meeting is set. Ms. Chow expressed her appreciation to Town Meeting for its approval of the **FY21 budget**. She also reported participating in the **Black Lives Matter/Moving Wellesley Forward** discussion last week. She was impressed with the engagement from students, teachers and other members of the community.

Ms. Martin expressed her appreciation for the individuals who called in to **Public Comment** earlier in the evening and shared their thoughts on remote learning. Ms. Martin also expressed her appreciation to Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen, Town Moderator, Town Clerk, and Town IT Department for all their work in making **Annual Town Meeting** happen and having the Town budgets approved. Ms. Martin also attended Thursday's forum on **Moving Wellesley Forward** and found it to be a very thoughtful engagement. She expects there will be a number of forums and discussions going forward and encouraged members to attend these events whenever possible. Ms. Martin announced that there will be **Committee meetings** scheduled this summer due to the reopening work that will need to be addressed.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lussier acknowledged WPS students for their engagement in advocacy through **Wake Up Wellesley and Black Lives Matter** and providing to Town Meeting members their viewpoints on particular topics. Whether one agrees or not with their points of view, this is the type of engagement that is encouraged of students and is built into the District's expectation of what should be engendered in students through the WPS Profile of a Graduate. Dr. Lussier expressed pride in WPS students for taking the time to be involved and he hopes the momentum continues in positive ways.

Dr. Lussier addressed the initial **DESE guidance** released today for the reopening of schools in the fall. It is not the final guidance, which he expects will continue to evolve over the summer addressing various facets of the opening. He referenced the communication he sent to parents earlier in the day outlining the major points of the guidance primarily with the DESE expressing a strong desire to return to in-person learning as soon as possible in the fall, as long as it can be done safely.

Dr. Lussier indicated there will be significant safety measures that will need to be in place to make this possible including wearing masks, maintaining social distance, adhering to personal hygiene, and following strict cleaning protocols.

Dr. Lussier noted that although the trajectory of the virus in Massachusetts has been moving in a positive direction, there is concern of a resurgence that could result in a return to additional measures to help contain any new outbreaks. With this in mind, DESE is asking school districts to be prepared for multiple contingencies. The request is to submit three plans to the state for review later this summer: one that allows for a full opening with restrictions, a hybrid model of in-person and remote learning, and a full remote-learning plan to be used in the event of a full closure. Dr. Lussier is pleased that the state is also planning to provide additional financial resources to help offset the many new expenses that communities will incur in order to proceed in this direction.

With reference to in-school learning, the guidance requires a 3-foot minimum distance between students in classrooms. DESE has asked districts to stress test this 3-foot minimum in classrooms and provide the results to them in early July. Wellesley has been working on this in each of its schools, determining how the classrooms will be set up, and how to use other spaces in the building as needed.

Dr. Lussier also noted that even if 100 percent of students return in the fall, school will look very different including food service being provided in classrooms instead of cafeterias and using cafeterias for instruction, and students may be moving very little throughout the day to limit social interaction. Some key areas that have not yet been defined in the guidance include transportation and athletics, which he believes will be coming in July.

Dr. Lussier reminded the Committee that Wellesley began its process of planning for these contingencies last month with the creation of an Advisory Committee on Reopening that includes student, staff, and parent representation. Smaller working groups focused on individual topics such as food service, building operations, transportation, and medical supplies have been created under this Advisory Committee. In addition to the learning already captured from the experience of the past few months, planning work will be informed by additional survey work and focus groups involving parents, students and teachers that will be conducted over the summer. Dr. Lussier indicated feedback will be gathered before and after the plans are developed, but noted that the timetable for all of this work is extremely tight.

Dr. Lussier encouraged the community to read the DESE guidance and stay tuned for updates.

STUDENT ADVISORY REPRESENTATIVE

Ms. White mentioned that in addition to discussions that have been ongoing on Black Lives Matter and the anti-racism movement, a protest is planned by WHS students and alum to raise awareness of their experiences at the high school. Ms. Lahive noted there has been discussion among students on the desire to have the Administration proactively address curriculum that is racist, rather than react when a situation arises.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the June 9, 2020 Open Session minutes as presented to the Committee this evening.

MOVED: Ms. Gray; **SECONDED:** Mr. Roberti; **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 June 16, 2020 Open Session minutes as presented to the Committee this evening.

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

MOTION CARRIED: Yes – 4; No – 0; Abstention – 1.

Action on the June 16, 2020 Executive Session was deferred. Ms. Gray emailed a copy of these minutes to each member for review.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Ms. Martin had previously forwarded the assignment sheet to the Committee members and reviewed the various assignments and the member assigned to each. After a discussion, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to approve the School Committee Assignments as presented this evening as follows:

Policy Subcommittee	Linda Chow, Catherine Mirick
School Building Committee (SBC)	Sharon Gray, Melissa Martin
Permanent Building Committee (PBC) - Hunnewell	Sharon Gray; Melissa Martin (alt.)
Middle School Renovation Projects	Melissa Martin
Playing Fields Task Force (PFTF)	Linda Chow
School Wellness Advisory Committee (SWAC)	Catherine Mirick
Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)	Jim Roberti
Committee 21	Melissa Martin; Sharon Gray
North 40	Vacant

Superintendent Working Groups

Profile of a Graduate / Strategic Plan	Melissa Martin; Linda Chow
District Progress Report	Linda Chow
Reopening Committee	Sharon Gray

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

REORGANIZATION

After a brief discussion, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to nominate Linda Chow as Chair of the School Committee effective immediately.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Chow then entertained a motion to nominate Melissa Martin as Vice Chair of the School Committee effective immediately.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The position of secretary was voted at a previous meeting.

The Committee members and the Superintendent each thanked Ms. Martin for her leadership, professionalism, and work as chair over the past year.

The Committee was joined by Board of Selectmen Chair Marjorie Freiman, and past Committee members Matt Kelley and Michael D’Ortenzio, Jr. all of whom thanked Ms. Martin for her service, professionalism and support of the students and staff of the Wellesley Public Schools.

PUBLIC COMMENT There was one caller who was asked to submit his comments in writing due to the need for a hard stop to accommodate Wellesley Media and the Permanent Building Committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 6:35 pm, Ms. Chow entertained a motion to adjourn.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gray
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

Draft Minutes June 9 and 16, 2020 Open Sessions
2019-20 School Committee Assignments Worksheet