Wellesley Public Schools  
School Committee Meeting  
October 15, 2019  
Juliani Room, 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, and members Sharon Gray and Jim Roberti; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent Cindy Mahr; and Student Advisory Members Violet Lahive and Rachel White. Ms. Martin announced that the meeting was being recorded by local media.

PUBLIC COMMENT
No one present wished to speak.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS
Mr. Roberti recently attended a Parent Advisory Council coffee where the new Student Services Director, Sarah Orlov, was introduced and did a great job presenting. The meeting was very well attended and there was great conversation.

Ms. Chow indicated World of Wellesley is sponsoring a gathering and dialogue on the community’s core values. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, October 21st, at the Community Center and will have a panel that includes Dr. Lussier as well as other town and faith leaders. Mass STEM week is scheduled for the week of October 20 through the 26th, with many activities being sponsored by the Wellesley Educational Foundation in partnership with the schools. Ms. Chow also reported she attended the Playing Fields Task Force (PFTF) meeting last Friday where she learned the softball field work is underway and expected to be completed by the end of November. Phase 2 will not begin until next summer. She also informed the Committee that at the next PFTF meeting, the PFTF lights subcommittee will be presenting a proposal for lights at the stadium, which will require acceptance by PFTF and a vote by the NRC. Community outreach work continues regarding the Sprague practice wall.

Ms. Gray reported that on Thursday, she will be attending the first meeting of the School Wellness Advisory Committee for the year. There will be a focus on juuling and vaping, as well as other relevant issues.

Ms. Martin reported she and Ms. Gray recently attended the Bates PTO meeting where they provided an overview of the work of the School Committee to an engaged audience. Committee members will be visiting PTOs at each of the schools over the next few months. Ms. Martin indicated that schematic design project for the WMS casework and art room project was discussed at the PBC meeting on Thursday. There was discussion about the possible addition of Room 217 to the project. As a result, she will be asking FMD and the designers to present this proposal to the Committee, as well as providing an update of the kitchen schematic design work which the Committee had expressed an interest in viewing. Ms. Martin was pleased to report that the new heating system at the Middle School is up and running. She expressed her appreciation to the
FMD who was the OPM for the project, as well as the contractors who worked hard over the summer for having this work done ahead of schedule.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**
Dr. Lussier reminded the community that there are two meetings scheduled to explain the new **Standard-based report cards** that will be used throughout the elementary level. There is a meeting this evening in the WMS auditorium at 6:15 pm and on Thursday, October 17th at 9 am at the Wellesley Community Center. The **Bates Pumpkin Fair** is scheduled for this Saturday, October 19th. Dr. Lussier reported that the WPS Administrative Council held a full day working session on the new Strategic Plan taking the priorities approved by the Committee and creating operational plans for this work. A second full day is scheduled for October 29th.

**CONSENT AGENDA**
- Minutes Approval: September 17 and October 1, 2019 Open Sessions
- Declaration of Surplus: Performing Arts Materials
  - Student Services Curriculum Materials.

After a brief discussion, upon a motion made by Mr. Kelley and seconded by and Ms. Gray, the Committee **unanimously VOTED** to approve the September 17, 2019 Open Session Minutes as presented.

After a brief discussion, upon a motion made by Mr. Kelley and seconded by and Mr. Roberti, the Committee **VOTED** to approve the October 1, 2019 Open Session Minutes as presented. 4 in favor; 1 abstention

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

**SY2019-20 HIRING**
The Committee was joined by Human Resources Director Gayle McCracken who presented the SY2019-20 Hiring Report in particular with a lens toward diversity. Dr. Lussier recognized Ms. McCracken for her leadership and hard work in recruiting and hiring efforts over the past school year.

Ms. McCracken reviewed the eight administrators hired for this school year; statistics around leave of absences; CORIs and SORIs that were run; and provided an overview of the five bargaining unit contracts that were settled.

Diversity recruiting methods were addressed. Ms. McCracken acknowledged the Wellesley Education Foundation which awarded WPS a $10,000 grant for MTEL (Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure) assistance, with eight grants awarded. Administrator training was held relative to cultural diversity hiring, and Gayle, along with a teacher of color, attended a number of job fairs specifically geared toward hiring
people of color. Positions were also advertised in various newspapers geared towards Spanish, Asian and African-American communities.

Ms. McCracken discussed the need for a diverse faculty and staff that mirrors the increasingly diverse student body. The annual recruitment goal is to hire 20 percent of educators of color. Currently, the diversity percentage in the workforce is 8 percent. Next steps include the creation of affinity groups, working on career ladders, hiring diverse substitute teachers and teaching assistants; working with the DEI Director to develop a shadow program; continue to educate administrators about diversity hiring, as well as bring more WPS administrators of color to job fairs.

Ms. McCracken was thanked for her work and the presentation.

**FY21 Budget Calendar and Guidelines**

Ms. Martin reported that the Board of Selectmen had approved a 3.5 percent guideline for both the Town and the School this year while also committing to make the Schools whole for the variability on Special Education costs. She noted that the Board of Selectmen appeared to intend to cover the projected needs for the Schools based on information that had been shared with them by the School Administration. However, when the Board discussed the Schools figures in their meeting prior to finalizing the guidelines, they removed an additional $650,000 in turnover savings which had already been taken into consideration in the FY21 projections provided by the School Administration. Therefore, the Board of Selectmen was assuming a $1.3M turnover for FY21, $650,000 more than the turnover assumed by the School Administration. This discrepancy was discussed with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Selectmen and it was agreed that there needed to be follow up on this and greater clarification.

The Committee discussed the development of the FY21 guideline. It was felt that it may be best to have the WPS and Town financial staff meet and determine how to address the portion of the guidance related to covering the variability in Special Education costs.

There was a question relative to the reason for the higher percentage increase projected in level service for FY21 than in previous years. Ms. Mahr reviewed the items that may have impacted the higher level service percentage of just over 4 percent including a restructure of the extended school year salary structure agreed to in the new collective bargaining contracts; making whole some positions that were proposed for total funding in FY20 but were not fully funded and bringing them up to the level proposed in FY20, as well as the addition of new teaching assistant positions and associated health benefits; and contractual increases for transportation.

Dr. Lussier reviewed the proposed calendar for FY21 budget process and significant dates including Advisory budget orientation on November 19th; presentation of the Superintendent’s budget to the School Committee on December 10th, with an alternate date of December 11th if Special Town Meeting carries over to December 10th. Dr. Lussier indicated that staff is already actively engaged in preparing their needs and priorities with all budget proposals due to the Administration at the end of next week.
The FY21 guidelines were discussed. It was noted that the Selectmen have set a 3.5 percent guideline for Schools and the Town. The Committee discussed that they would like to see a budget based on the Selectmen’s guidelines, as well as a budget that addresses the Department’s needs and priorities. It was suggested that there should be clarity on the definition of level service, how it is calculated and changes from previous year.

Ms. Martin indicated there is a need for continued discussion with staff and committee/board members regarding the current year’s shortfall in Special Education and how it will be addressed in FY21 and going forward. It is suggested that a meeting be held between the WPS and the Town’s financial staff prior to the next Committee meeting to discuss this issue.

**Redistricting Guidelines**
The Committee reviewed and discussed the guidelines that were revised during the October 8th meeting which will be provided to the Superintendent in the preparation of the redistricting plan.

Action was deferred until the next Committee meeting.

**Policy Discussion**
Mr. Kelley reviewed the four policies that have been recently reviewed and revised by the Policy Subcommittee and are being brought forward to the full Committee for review and action.

Changes in Policy JG, Student Enrollment and School Assignment, were reviewed. Primarily, the changes include providing families the option of either placing the siblings of a student in a special program at the same school as the sibling or keeping the sibling at their own neighborhood school.

In addition, the policy provides a number of recommended actions the Administration should take in order to avoid running a single section at a grade level. It was recognized however that, regardless of these recommendations, a single section may sometimes be inevitable.

The Committee discussed the policy and various scenarios of providing flexibility to families.

Changes to Policy DBJ, Budget Transfer Authority, as well as minor changes to Policy JLCB, Immunization Requirements for Attendance in Schools; and Policy EEAA, Busing Eligibility, were reviewed.

The policies will be posted on the website for community feedback, with action slated for the next meeting.
**PUBLIC COMMENT**
Leda Eizenberg, 10 Kirkland Circle, thanked the Committee for their efforts in revising Policy JG to address the issues of siblings of children in special programs, as well as single section grade levels.

**ADJOURNMENT**
At approximately 7:03 pm, 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:**
Memos for Surplus Declaration – Student Services & Performing Arts
FY20 New Hire and EEO Statistics Report
FY21 Budget Calendar
FY20 Budget Guidance – Final
Draft Policies DBJ, EEAA, JG and JLCB