

**MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 09, 2023
ONLINE VIA ZOOM**

Recording: <https://cloud.castus.tv/vod/weston/video/63bdcafe02af0400081eb96d?page=HOME>

1. Opening Business

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:31pm via Zoom by Mr. Ken Newberg, Chair. In attendance were Ms. Alyson Muzila, Vice-chair, Ms. Attia Linnard, Mr. Jeff Lucas, and Ms. Maijia Cirulis-Gooch of the School Committee. Ms. Keitrice Johnson, METCO Family Rep to the School Committee; Ms Cortney Leung, Student Rep to the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Dr. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; Ms. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations; and Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and Libraries.

Chair's Report

Mr. Newberg welcomed everyone to 2023. He stated that the budget season would begin on January 17th and would be primarily discussed over the next few months. He noted that those meetings would be held via zoom to provide a more convenient way for people to participate, avoid unnecessary late night winter travel, and to limit potential exposure to respiratory viruses. He then went on to outline the agenda for the evening.

Mr. Newberg congratulated Phil Oates, Middle School Assistant Principal, who received the MSAA Assistant Principal of the Year award. He stated that the budget advisory committee meetings had started and the Superintendent's initial budget would be presented at the next meeting. He then provided an update on the status of WEA collective bargaining and explained the three step process when parties can't come to an agreement. Step one, parties attempt to negotiate an agreement on their own. If parties do not reach an agreement and stop making progress, which is also known as "impasse" then either party can request a mediator from the state. If one side objects, the state would then conduct an investigation, ask for support from the parties, and make a conclusion as to whether continuing meeting for direct negotiations would be fruitful, and if not, whether moving to the next step, mediation, was appropriate. If mediation doesn't work the parties go to step three called "fact finding". At the conclusion of fact finding, the state issues a report that provides the position of both sides and may issue a recommendation which is non-binding. He discussed the point of fact finding and cautioned that prior confidential negotiations would become public during the fact finding step of the process if an agreement was not reached..

Mr. Newberg reported that the district had interviewed several candidates for the position of Administrative Coordinator/School Committee Secretary and was confident that an appointment would be made. The previous School Committee Secretary left Case House the month earlier. The School Committee relies on its Secretary to help coordinate School Committee meetings,

meetings between the administration and School Committee, and makes the first draft of School Committee meeting minutes.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Connolly also congratulated Phil Oates on his award, stating he is a wonderful vice principal and that she was grateful to have him as a leader on her administrative team. She then announced that on Thursday, the Curriculum Forum on Writing would be held virtually. She thanked Dr. McCanne and his team for making the forums successful.

Subcommittee Reports

On behalf of the Sustainability Committee, Ms. Muzilla reported that a survey came out from the Students for Environmental Action at the High School to get feedback from faculty, staff and students about an initiative to develop reusable water bottles with the Weston High School logo on it. She also reported that the Field School composting pilot project was getting close with the help of the Town's new sustainability coordinator and would be announced once it starts.

Ms. Leung gave updates on sports and music events that were recently held at the High School. She reported that the High School store partnered with Weston Boosters to sell merchandise for the rest of the school year. She noted that the second quarter ended that day and students were excited about the upcoming no homework weekend.

Ms. Johnson announced that the BWMPO would be launching their February fundraiser for the John Hudson Memorial Scholarship with a virtual presentation highlighting the experiences of Weston High School students on February 11, 2023. More information on how the community could participate and give support would come out the next week.

Public Comment

Mr. Newberg reminded everyone of the Public Comment protocol.

The first person to speak was Lisa Reitano of the Finance Committee. Ms. Reitano gave her support for the 5.75% increase over three years offered to teachers. She pointed out that many districts settled for approximately 7% over three years and that no other towns had settled for anything close to the 17.25% as requested by the WEA. She stated that when determining cost of living increases we need to provide a fair salary increase relative to teachers in other towns as well as other employees within our own town, and that the five other unions in our district had settled for 5.75%. Lisa personally thanked the School Committee for all their hard work in trying to come to an agreement to provide a reasonable, responsible salary increase and for not agreeing to salary increases that are substantially higher than anyone else on top of our already generous salaries and benefits.

The second speaker was Weston resident, Alan Day. Mr. Day encouraged the School Committee to keep the teacher compensation inflation neutral. He stated his opinion that a 5.75% would make sense in the absence of current inflation and that accepting a 5.75% increase would be like asking teachers to take a pay cut.

Third to speak was Lindsay Quezada, Grade 5 Field School teacher. Ms. Quezada shared her thoughts and perspectives on the WEA request on guaranteed elementary preparation.

Janet Kresl Moffat, High School Biology teacher, spoke next. Ms. Kresl Moffat asked the audience to think about the amazing faculty and whether or not the salary increase offered by the School Committee would support that level of amazing. She spoke about the challenges of the current teaching environment and the need for a cost of living increase to keep up with inflation.

Next to speak was Jody Salisbury, Middle School Science teacher. She urged the committee to allow a minimum of 5 sick days in addition to their five personal paid days off for teachers to care for family members.

The last speaker was Mitch Finnegan, Director of Wellness Education. Mr. Finnegan spoke about the pilot program of exempting seniors from physical education. He expressed his strong opposition to this program.

2. Major Business

HS/MS Grounds: Proposed Athletic Field 1 Lights Private Fundraising Proposal

Mr. Newberg cross-referenced [Policy KFA \(Operation of Tower Lighting for Proctor Field\)](#) for this discussion.

Charlie Hipwood, member of the Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee, gave reasons for the need for lights on Field 1, the multipurpose turf field at the High School. He asked for school committee permission and support to run a privately run campaign to raise the \$500,000 needed to fund the project. Dr. Connolly supported the project but raised concern about the 40% rise in utility costs and how that would affect the operating cost going forward. There was discussion about how often the field would be used; the possible costs to run the lights; setting precedents for fundraising; the use of environmentally friendly lights; and getting additional data before committing to the project.

Upon motion made by Ms. Cirulius-Gooch, and seconded by Mr. Lucas, by roll call vote, all voting aye, the Weston School Committee unanimously supported Charlie Hipwood to publicly discuss fundraising for Field 1 Lights, but before School Committee could go forward with final approval for this project, he needed to return with estimated lighting costs and projected usage data.

Internal Program Review: Science Department

Dr. Carter introduced Dr. Susan Erickson, Grade K-5 Science/Social Studies Specialist, and Dr. Steve Ribisi, Grade 6-12 Science Department Head who led the Science Internal Program Review Committee. Dr. Erickson and Dr. Ribisi presented a slide show of the [Self Study report](#) that was generated by the committee.

Dr. Erickson began by explaining how their report was compiled. Dr. Ribisi praised the amazing work of K-12 science teachers and noted that the purpose of the report was to identify areas with room for improvement. After presenting a [slide show](#) of their self-study report, Dr. Erickson and Dr. Ribisi answered questions about the grade 8 to grade 9 transition; science classroom time for elementary students; the differences between the opportunity to do labwork in CP and Honors classes; whether students needed a tutor to be successful in Honors Physics and the alternative to private tutors to make support equitable; why the percentage of students taking AP tests in Science and average test scores had fallen over the past few years; and how School Committee can support the Science Department with the upcoming changes in MCAS assessments.

- **Formulation of External Review Questions**

Dr. Carter explained that he would work with Dr. Erickson and Dr. Ribisi to combine the follow up questions from the self-study with the School Committee questions to formulate a charge to the External Review Committee. That charge would be presented for approval at a future school committee meeting.

- **Manner and Method of External Review Team Composition**

Dr. Connolly stated that as previously suggested, she would take the lead and work with Dr. Carter, Dr. Erickson and Dr. Ribisi to develop the External Review Team.

External Program Review: Guidance and Counseling Program

Martha Bakken, Director of Student Services, Emily Tucker, Assistant Director of Student Services and Marla Schay, Guidance Director gave an overview of the recommendations from the [Guidance and Counseling External Program Review Report](#).

- **Implementation of Recommendations, Oversight and Additional Questions**

After the presentation, Mr. Newberg asked Ms. Bakken, Ms. Tucker, and Ms. Schay to circle back later in the spring or early fall to report on the progress of the recommended goals from the report. There was discussion about communication; availability of resources; the college application process; 504 recommendations; and the roles of the various counselors.

Revisions to [Policy IKF \(High School Graduation Requirements\)](#): Physical Education - Sports Substitution Pilot Review and Potential Expansion

- **Proposal to expand eligibility beyond seniors to use extracurricular sports participation in lieu of PE**

Besides expanding the policy to include juniors, there was discussion about giving credit to students for sports they participated in outside of school and the need for feedback from seniors currently participating in the program. The committee reviewed the first draft of the Policy IKF revisions and determined they would share it with the Wellness Education Department for input before presenting it for approval at the next meeting.

The committee also requested the administration poll students and families on their experience and desire regarding sports substitution.

Revisions to [Policy GBEA \(Staff Ethics / Conflict of Interest Policy\)](#): Coaches and other Extracurricular Conflicts

- **Proposal to prohibit staff from coaching and supervising family members during extracurricular activities**

Mr. Newberg shared the proposed revisions to Policy GBEA. The committee discussed adding language to allow the Superintendent to grant an exception if an alternative coach could not be found. The new language proposed to disallow coaches from coaching their own children to avoid both actual and the appearance of favoritism. Feedback was welcomed from the community and a final vote was scheduled for the next meeting.

3. Other Business

Policy Review Project: [Updates to Section D](#) (Vote)

Having already reviewed and commented on the proposed changes, this was the School Committee's second read of the revised budgetary policies. Upon motion made by Mr. Lucas. and seconded by Ms. Cirulis-Gooch, by roll call vote, all voting aye, the Weston School Committee unanimously adopted the updates to Section D of the Policy Manual as presented.

Consent Agenda (Vote)

- [11/16/2022](#) and [11/29/2022 Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Warrant Summary](#)

Upon motion made by Mr. Newberg and seconded by Mr. Lucas, by roll call vote, all voting aye, the Weston School Committee voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Anticipated Major Business for Next Regular Zoom SC Meeting - January 17, 2022 at 6:30 PM

- FY24 Superintendent's Initial Recommended Budget
- School Committee Yearly Town Report

4. Adjournment to Executive Session

At 10:38pm, Mr. Newberg moved by roll call vote with Ms. Muzila voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Ms, Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye, to adjourn to executive session and not return to open session for the purpose of discussing WEA Collective Bargaining strategy as doing so in open session would have a detrimental effect on bargaining position.