

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

January 13, 2020

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:00 PM at Weston Middle School by Mr. John Henry, Chair. In attendance were Mrs. Danielle Black, Mr. Alex Cobb, Ms. Anita Raman, and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; and Ms. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Also in attendance were Ms. Allison Abrams, Chair of the Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee; Mr. John Gibbons, Weston Middle School Principal; Mr. Phil Oates, Weston Middle School Assistant Principal; Ms. Jen Faber, Woodland School Principal; Ms. Erin Maguire, Country School Principal; Dr. Dan Green, Field School Principal; Ms. Kelly Flynn, Weston High School Assistant Principal; Ms. Jennifer Truslow, Director of Student Services; Ms. Anne Zernicke, Assistant Director of Student Services; Mr. Tim Heavey, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Kerry Dunne, Grade 6-12 History Department Head.

I.B. Chairman's Report – Mr. John Henry welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the agenda's Major Business items. He reviewed the process for budget presentation and review, noting that Dr. Connolly would be presenting the recommended FY21 budget at this meeting, but in-depth review would occur at meetings on January 27 and 29, with a formal budget hearing to take place on February 10, and meeting with Finance Committee in March. Mr. Henry indicated there would be ample opportunity for conversation, reflection, and work on the budget ahead.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly highlighted recent achievements in the district, reporting that Advanced Photography students William Spicer, Elizabeth MacKenzie, Caitlyn Rhatigan, and Nathaniel Lathrop were selected by their classmates to represent Weston at the Griffin Photography Museum's Secondary School Photography Show at Regis College in January. Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that the WHS Winter Art Show, featuring the best work from first semester WHS Art students, will open on January 15 with a reception from 5-7pm. She also noted that Field School Art Teacher Jake Jenga was recently named by a prestigious art organization as an up and coming artist to watch.

Dr. Connolly reported that, for the first time, some Weston Latin students participated in the National Classical Etymology Exam, designed to test a student's ability to handle both Latin and Greek derivatives and their usage in the English language. Latin teachers Gina Barbosa and Veronica Quinn proudly report that Gold medal awards went to Jessie Yuan, Sofie Watkins, and Shrihan Yadav; Silver medal winners were Olivia Jackson, Richard Li, and Daniel Zhu; and Bronze medals went to Neil Malur, Ian Chang, and Zunian Luo.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – Mr. Henry reported on a good discussion on schedules with students at the SAC meeting. Ms. Raman reported on upcoming PTO events. Ms. Stewart reported on the Sustainability Committee, noting the agreement for solar panels is signed and they are moving forward.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

II.A. Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee Mid-Year Report

Ms. Abrams provided an update of WEEFC year to date. She noted that there were three new board members this year who brought new skill sets, ideas and energy to the board. She reported that the nominating process for new board members would soon be underway, noting that this would be her last year on WEEFC. Ms. Abrams noted that WEEFC continues its commitment to students, reviewed the distribution and content of this year's grants, discussed fundraising efforts, and mentioned the upcoming Weston Wingding. Ms. Abrams expressed appreciation to the WEEFC Board members for their work, Dr. Carter for his insight and, and to Patty Ferguson,

Administrative Assistant, for her support, as well as to the donors who support WEEFC. Ms. Abrams said they will put a button or link on their webpage for people to access information on volunteering. No action taken.

II.B. Presentation of Proposed FY21 School Budget

Dr. Connolly began expressed appreciation to the School Committee and the entire administrative team for their help in the budget development process. She said the proposed budget retains programs but is reflective of the district's declining enrollment, maintains student curriculum choices, and provides opportunities for and supports all students. She reported the proposed budget adheres to the School Committee approved guidelines but includes reductions that will impact people and their jobs. Dr. Connolly presented a proposed FY21 budget with an increase of 3.54% over FY20. She presented total increases by category and by location, noting a 19.05% increase in contractual student services, replacement of Chromebooks, Foreign Language Lab computers, and three new buses. Dr. Connolly reported that the budget includes proposed staffing reductions in the general fund totaling 13.319 FTE, including FTE reductions of 1.225 at Elementary Schools, 1.950 at Middle School, 3.988 at High School, and 6.156 in Student Services. Mr. David Poras, Math teacher and Weston Education Association President, asked about details and when reductions in staff will be communicated and discussed. Dr. Connolly indicated that all people impacted will be contacted by end of day Tuesday, after which time the complete budget would be posted online and noted the reductions could be publicly communicated and discussed at the review meetings later in January.

Several audience members expressed concerns about possible loss of opportunity for students and the impact of reductions on class size. Dr. Connolly indicated that any increase in class size would maintain class size well within the approved range but would eliminate numerous very small sections. Mr. Henry suggested people email any School Committee member or Dr. Connolly with questions and noted that he and Mr. Cobb comprise the Budget Subcommittee along with Ms. Matthews and Dr. Connolly. Mr. Poras requested the budget overview to faculty include list of reductions. No action taken.

II.C. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House)

Case House - Mrs. Black reported that the Case House renovation was progressing, and furniture is being looked at now. She said a community open house has been tentatively scheduled for Saturday, March 28 and anticipates occupancy before then.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve minutes of December 16, 2019.

Other minutes were tabled until a future meeting.

III.B. Business Actions – Certificate of Warrant

Ms. Matthews presented a Certificate of the Secretary, approval of warrants for payment.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$3,668,08.23 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:10 PM.

Documents used by Committee:

- Copy of [Superintendent's Budget Presentation](#)