

**WOBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**June 1, 2020**

A Remote Meeting of the Woburn School Committee was held on June 1, 2020, beginning at 7:30 pm.

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-Present, Ms. Cormier-Present, Mr. Kisiel-Present, Mr. Lipsett-Present, Mr. Mulrenan-Present, Dr. Wells-Present, Chairperson Crowley-Present

Chairperson Crowley commented the budget is available on our website.

Chairperson Crowley began by stating this is a public meeting convened under an executive order from the Governor that allows a public entity to conduct a meeting that waives the rule that normally requires a quorum in person. We are conducting this meeting remotely under the authority of the Governor's Emergency Order issued on March 10, 2020.

This meeting is being recorded, if your face is being shown on the screen, your face will be shown on the recording and your commentary will be heard.

Dr. Wells made a motion to open the public hearing on the School Committee FY 21 Budget. Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Public Hearing on Budget**

Chairperson Crowley had two people that contacted her through email to be recognized by the school committee at tonight's meeting. She let them know that the school committee cannot respond to public comment, they can only hear public comment and deliberate after.

Mary Bonsignore, lifelong resident of Woburn and a 5th grade teacher at Malcolm White. She wanted to speak at this meeting tonight to give input on how important class size is. On September 4th the day before school started the 5th grade classes at Malcolm White did not have 5 empty seats that should have been allotted for move in students. By September 23rd her classroom was at capacity. It was not until the middle of October they were told they were going to get an additional 5th grade teacher. On November 27th they had to gather both 5th grade classes and explain to them that there would be a new teacher in 5th grade and 10 students from her classroom and 9 students from the other classroom would have to go into the new teachers

classroom. Given the social emotional state that many have been concerned about the last three years, this was devastating to these kids. By December 2nd they finally got the third 5th grade teacher. At that point they had students for three months and had to place them in a new classroom. She is aware they can have 28 students in a classroom but to give a realm of what it looked like on the day of the ALICE training they could not get out of the classroom because they tripped over each other not because they were running or fooling but because they simply because there were too many students in the classroom. Ms. Bonsignore wants to make sure something like this does not happen again.

Barbara Locke began by sending her thoughts and prayers to those who are dealing with illness and loss. As President of the WTA, she extended her appreciation to Superintendent Crowley and Chairperson Ellen Crowley. These are very difficult times to be a leader in their position but Ms. Locke knows firsthand the collaboration, and honesty of their work they have exemplified at the table over and over during these difficult times.

Ms. Elissa Milto thanked the committee for all the work they have been doing. Ms. Milto is requesting more support at the administration level for Special Ed Director, Ms. Maureen Ryan. If she had another layer of support things could get taken care of quickly for things that do not need to go to her attention.

Chairperson Crowley acknowledged that the school committee received a letter from SEPAC tonight at 7:28 PM. Chairperson Crowley will forward that to school committee members and accept a motion to make that part of the public record.

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to make that letter from SEPAC a part of the permanent record. Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Mayor Galvin began by saying everyone who is listening knows about the issues not only facing the city but the state as far as drastic reduction in revenues. The city is very supportive of the schools but in listening to the school committee getting feedback about the budget that the committee put in front of the public is not what Mayor Galvin, Dr. Crowley and Chairperson Crowley have been talking about. The city stands ready, willing, and able to support the schools like they have in the past and the Mayor has talked specifically with them about the receipts that are going to be down this year and would be glad to go over them right now if they don't already know them. Local receipts are going to be down 6 million dollars this year. Those local receipts are made up of meal tax, hotel/motel, excise tax, building fees. State Aid; we are looking at a modest production of 2.5 million dollars, that is about 8.5 million dollars that we are not going to have in our revenue stream to match up with the budget. With that being known, people say well you have to use the free cash. We do have a plan to use our free cash. Free cash is used as a bridge to get through this budget and to get to next year. Next year we are not going to see a return we had to the recipes either so we are going to be down not only this year but next year and maybe the following year. No one knows where this recovery is going. There is also going to be a major issue facing the city next fiscal year when we start looking at our real estate taxes.

The problem that we are going to see if the businesses that we rely on, the real estate tax and the commercial property tax are going to be drastically impacted by reduction in value. We are being warned by the analysts who tell us those values are going to go way down. When that happens we are going to have a greater cash crunch than we have right now. We are not the only city or town who is facing this. We don't know what schools are going to look like come September. In looking at the budget the school department has gone up not down. In what we are talking about from the city side is somewhere around a 3.8% increase and when you add on top of the \$500k we are getting from the Federal government that is actually a 4.5% increase. This shouldn't be a surprise to Chairperson Crowley as they have talked about this and Mayor Galvin said she told him she was going to get this budget under 4%. Chairperson Crowley said she told the mayor they were going to get the budget to 4%. Mayor Galvin said the city is committing it's reserve to not only help the school budget but also the city budget to bridge this time where we don't have the receipts coming in. We are going to need our reserve to cover that time when revenues are not coming in. From the city side they are being very respectful of the needs of the school department. Mayor Galvin wanted to express clearly his position and where we stand.

Chairperson Crowley said they have met several times. A 5.9% increase budget was presented and that of course was difficult for the city to support. The school committee was always going to look at a 4% budget; it is difficult for us to go underneath that.

Mayor Galvin stated the budget is not at 4% the school committee is not looking at that \$500k that is buried in the budget that is another .7% making the budget 5%. Even in great times that would be a generous budget. We are in difficult times and the city is stepping up.

### **Vote to Close Public Hearing**

Dr. Wells made a motion to close the public hearing.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Chairperson Crowley stated the public hearing on the FY 21 Budget is officially closed and called to order the 6/1/20 school committee meeting.

### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-Present, Ms. Cormier-Present, Mr. Kisiel-Present, Mr. Lipsett-Present, Mr. Mulrenan-Present, Dr. Wells-Present, Chairperson Crowley-Present

### **Budget Deliberations and Debate**

Dr. Wells was hoping to get a final number from the Mayor because there seems to be some confusion.

Mrs. Chisholm said she believes he said 3.8%.

Dr. Wells wants to know if 3.8 % is counting the 500k or after the 500k.

### **Freshman Athletics**

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to reconsider his vote on freshman sports.

Chairperson Crowley was told that motion is not necessary because things are always changing in the budget.

Chairperson Crowley recognized Athletic Director Jim Duran.

Mr. Duran began by saying he was asked to make a cut from the athletic department and his cut was freshman sports. Busses, officials, those things are necessities. We do have some sports we haven't been able to field teams. Our field hockey and softball teams are freshman sports we haven't been able to field over the last two years. Bussing, maybe in the fall we might not be able to travel to games.

As athletic directors there are still unknowns.

Mr. Mulrenan's intention is to try to get at least something in the freshman athletic budget; once you eliminate this it might be hard to bring back in the future.

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to enter into public record letters from Coach Belcher and Coach Roy to reinstate freshman sports.

Chairperson Crowley stated she has a motion to submit letters from Jack Belcher and Scott Roy to the school committee into public record.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to add \$1,000 to the athletic budget as a line item for freshman sports.

Motion was seconded by Mr. Kisiel.

Dr. Wells, on the motion, it is not clear to him what the purpose of this motion is. Essentially if we look at the budget, Mr. Duran determined that was where he thought he could do without. He sees no purpose in putting \$1,000 in.

Mrs. Chisholm has always supported athletics but unfortunately we have to make some serious cuts and Mr. Duran thinks this is something he could do. The only problem she would have in putting the \$1,000 back in is parents are going to assume every one of the sports is being put back in and we are going to have some parents who are able to fundraise for the kids and other parents not being able to for a freshman team and this would bring more inequity to the athletic department.

### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-no, Ms. Cormier-no, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-no, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-no, Chairperson Crowley-no

Motion fails 5-2.

Chairperson Crowley asked Mrs. Chisholm if she could review fees, she already referred this to finance and would like this for the June 9th agenda.

Mr. Kisiel asked if they wanted the budget to get to 3.8% or 3.8% minus 500K.

Dr. Wells suggested the committee at least try to get to 3.8%.

Mayor Galvin came back on to say if you closed the public hearing you shouldn't be debating.

You can come to his office to debate to talk about this. If you close the public hearing, you close the public hearing.

Chairperson Crowley responded by saying one of the topics for the regular school committee meeting tonight is budget deliberation. This is the first time she is hearing from Mayor Galvin that he wants a 3.8% number. We have a 4.284% budget that we were ready to pass.

Dr. Wells commented the idea is after the public discussion the school committee can review its budget based on the input after the discussion. That is what the committee is trying to do. They are trying to take into account the mayor's comments and see what they can do before they send the budget down to the mayor.

Mrs. Chisholm asked Mayor Galvin what is the number he wants the school committee to get to, is it 3.8%?

Mayor Galvin responded yes that is the budget.

Dr. Crowley commented there have been a couple of folks who took advantage of the early retirement within the last couple of days. Before we go back to the cuts that were proposed 48 hours ago, he would like the opportunity through attrition to reduce the budget vs. cutting things. Now that we have a clear picture and are all on the same page, Dr. Crowley feels it would be beneficial to the administration to have 24 hours to make some thoughtful decisions rather than rush decisions.

#### **Vote on School Committee FY 2021 Budget**

Dr. Wells made a motion based on the input from the public hearing and discussions with the mayor to table the final vote on the FY 21 Budget until the committee gets input from administration.

Motion was seconded by, all in favor. Motion passes 7-0.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Chairperson Crowley passed the Chair to Mr. Mulrenan to handle the next agenda item.

Chairperson Crowley left the meeting.

#### **Vote on Non Union/Part Time Workers Payroll**

Dr. Crowley said we have been paying folks throughout and they have been doing some training.

Dr. Wells asked if there was any further discussion with the mayor regarding this issue.

Dr. Crowley said not recently. We were trying to stay in line with the city.

Ms. Chisholm said we have been paying them all along; this would be paying them for the remaining 3 weeks of school.

Dr. Wells made a motion that we approve the spending on the part-time workers until the end of the school year based on the input they are doing productive activities that are beneficial to the school department.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Ms. Crowley returned to the meeting and took over as Chairperson.

**Future Agenda Items**

Superintendent's Evaluation

Contract Negotiations between the school committee and Superintendent Crowley

Mrs. Chisholm will present their recommendations on athletic fees

Dr. Wells feels it's imperative that we have ongoing discussions throughout the summer with administration

Recreation appointment

Chairperson Crowley said we will probably need to have summer meetings.

Dr. Crowley stated we do not need an executive session tonight.

**Adjournment**

Mrs. Chisholm made a motion to adjourn.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jean MacLeod*

Jean MacLeod

Recording Secretary