

WOBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
January 29, 2020

A Regular Meeting of the Woburn School Committee was held on January 29, 2020 at the Joyce Middle School Conference Room, 55 Locust Street, Woburn, MA beginning at 7:00pm.

There was a moment of silence for Mr. Tony Rodriguez.

ROLL CALL

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

APPROVAL OF RECORDS

A motion was made to approve 1.13.20 SC Minutes.
Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Representative Noah Stebbins was in attendance to report.
Internship program for seniors in term IV. Applications are being reviewed.
This is the first year and it is the hope of administration this program will support the development of a profile of a graduate that is part of the next NEASC accreditation cycle.
Term II, semester I came to a close yesterday.
The annual Dating Game led by the Interact Club will take place on February 14th.
26 vape detectors were installed in all school bathrooms last week.
Woburn is hosting MassInsight for Sciences this Saturday.
The Science team placed 2nd this time. Their next meeting will be on February 11, 2020.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Ms. Melissa DeSimone, a parent volunteer at Reeves Elementary School, was present to talk about the policy the elementary library has; one book in and one book out. Kids get the chance to take 20 books out per year as they only have library once every other week. She did ask the school librarian about this policy, and she told Ms. DeSimone it is not a school policy, it is a district policy. This is strictly enforced at the Reeves.
Kids can go a month or two without taking a book out. There is a great group of parent volunteers at the Reeves and because of this they are able to have the kids come every week. The older kids have to very quickly pick out a book before they move on to the computer room.

Chairperson Crowley thanked Ms. DeSimone for her volunteer work at the Reeves and also for coming tonight. She will refer this topic to one of the subcommittees.

Dr. Wells asked that this be referred to the administration for review. He feels this should be discussed with the technology department; as this is not a policy.

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON

Mr. Concannon was present to report.

The annual state of the schools meeting was held this past Monday night. Mr. Concannon feels this is a great thing to do because it gives the council a chance to hear an update midyear on how things are going and to hear of how the money that was invested the prior year is being spent. It also gives council an advanced sneak peek to see what is coming up for this budget season. He appreciated the Administration for coming and thanked them for their presentation. It was chock-full of information. The feedback from the council was very positive. He is looking forward to the budget season with new ideas and new ways of thinking. He feels they will get a positive reception from the city council this year.

Chairperson Crowley thanked the city council for their warm welcome, and she also thanked Mr. Concannon for being the school committee liaison for the past 7 years.

Ms. Chisholm asked about tour dates for the schools.

Mr. Concannon said there were a couple of dates given, but he has not received any specific dates yet, but maybe we can get an email going.

Chairperson Crowley said that Mr. Dunkley spoke about Mr. Dunkley sending out an invitation to tour the schools on February 29th or March 14th. She will be asking for a consensus vote to see what works best for members. We will be extending an invitation for the City council to join as well.

Mr. Mulrenan told Mr. Concannon any of the council members can feel free to reach out as they can go right into our buildings to see the programs that are going on and also to see the fine work that our staff are doing each and every day.

Dr. Crowley thanked Mr. Concannon for having the opportunity to come down and speak to the council. As a follow up he did confirm that he sent the middle school report and the NESDEC report to the council.

REPORTS/ PRESENTATION OF SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF

WMHS YEARBOOK STAFF

Hannah Norman began by speaking about the convention. They were able to attend 10 lectures and found them very helpful in getting new perspectives for putting together a yearbook.

One of her favorite sessions was called Designs That Make Your Eyes Bleed; this workshop taught her how to create new layouts for the yearbook. She works on the sports page of the yearbook and this helped her to create a unique style. She met a girl her age who went to school in Oklahoma, and they learned how different each of their schools are. It was cool to see how their perspectives are different. They bonded as a group.

Victoria Moraes mentioned by attending this convention that it was helpful in helping them all bond as a team; she thinks they really became a family on this trip. She found it helpful to not only talk about the yearbook but to talk more about themselves and learn about each other. They have become more comfortable with each other since the trip and are able to share what they like and don't like. They became more cohesive and found it easier to talk to each other. She learned a lot in the Mod's workshop; little designs and elements on the page. She felt they were struggling in this area at the beginning of the year because they didn't have any. She learned how important it is to have some and how to put them in naturally and make them flow into the page rather than look like a chunk that was put there just to be put there. She really enjoyed the trip.

Sarah Elliott felt that not only were the lectures informative, but they also got to meet with the publisher Herf Jones. They had actual books that were judged before and that helped them. Herf Jones helped them out tremendously; they were able to use their point of view right then and there. Some of the lecturer's would randomly ask them questions; which had them thinking on their toes. She feels that having to do this will help her later on. The bonding was one of the best parts of the trip. Each member went to different lectures, and they were able to share what they learned with each other.

Riley Pooler described the overall trip as inspiring. She wants to minor in graphic design in college. To be surrounded by so many books, ideas, and designs was amazing. Besides the convention and workshops, they got to experience other workshops that did not fit directly into the yearbook. Some examples are video and infographics. It was exciting to learn new ideas and concepts. At the end of the day they would all meet in their rooms and discuss the workshops they attended and ideas.

Ms. Thifault and Ms. Gillis are extremely proud of the 9 students that went. The district should be extremely proud of the students; they were thoughtful, kind, and polite.

Sue Thifault received an email this week from Susan Hapell, the Herf Jones rep. She knows how special Woburn's yearbook ceremony is every year, and they would like to model Woburn's yearbook ceremony and use it nationally. Her Jones told her most schools do not do what we do; they hand them caps and gowns and yearbooks and that is it. Our city has always had a tradition since 1947.

Chairperson Crowley congratulated Ms. Thifault on this exciting news.

Mr. Kisiel asked if other schools are going to video yearbooks or integrating them as part of the yearbook. Ms. Pooler thought it was interesting that a lot of people make videos and use an app on their phone. She thought it was interesting to see different apps to use on your phone being used to make a video for a yearbook.

Mr. Mulrenan asked about other schools and their competitors.

Ms. Norman said there were a lot of different booths, there were different publishers and colleges graphic design wise. The students went to all the booths; and were able to look at a variety of yearbooks, for example from Texas and California. They saw different designs that they could incorporate into their yearbook. Some yearbooks include all grade levels. She thinks Woburn is special because their yearbook is just for seniors; 4 years of memories for the senior class.

Mr. Mulrenan was very happy to see them tonight and thanked them for representing us in DC. Superintendent Crowley thanked them for representing WMHS so well, and he is looking forward to the ceremony on June 3rd.

ATHLETIC FIELDS

Mr. David Dunkley was in attendance to talk about the game field and the track at the high school. They were installed in 2007 and will be going into our 13th year of use this spring. Both the field and the track have gone beyond their recommended life, which is 10 years.

Mr. Dunkley met with Athletic Director Mr. Duran to work together on this project. They met with a couple manufacturers for the field, and they decided they would like to move forward with field turf. The current field is field turf; it's Vertex XM65, and they would like to upgrade the turf to Vertex Prime. The big advantage to that is we will have more material in the infill, we will be adding an extra two pounds of sand and rubber which will help with injuries. The other advantage with Vertex Prime is the backing system, it is a mesh system instead of just holes, it does a better job of draining the field. The current field has drained real well, but this is something even better. Vertex Prime is what the Patriots play on and a lot of D1 schools also use Vertex Prime. It is a great product and it is time to replace the field.

It is also time to repair, resurface, and reline the track.

Mr. Dunkley is coming forward to get the committee's approval and support to move forward with this project. The project cost is \$650,000.00. We will be funding half of the cost from the field rental account. Mr. Dunkley spoke with the Mayor, who told him he would commit to the other half by going through city funds to fund his half.

Mr. Kisiel asked Mr. Elia what amount was in the field rental account. Mr. Elia said \$550,000.00.

Mr. Kisiel asked about the timeline for doing this project.

Mr. Dunkley would like to do this project in mid-July. It will take place during a two-week window weather permitting, however he needs to have the appropriation in front of the city council sooner rather than later. The vendor's schedule is going to start getting full.

We need to act quickly to guarantee we can get this done over the summer, so we don't impact school use.

Dr. Wells asked about health concerns about the material being used in synthetic fields. Mr. Dunkley said there were some concerns about using rubber. There is no documentation saying that it does cause any long term health issues. Mr. Dunkley and Mr. Duran did look at other types of infill. The issue is if you go with cork or several others; they all freeze, rubber does not freeze. You can't play a Thanksgiving game on a frozen field. If it freezes, you are looking at other possible injuries. Both of them feel very strongly that the crumb rubber is the best for us.

Mr. Lipsett asked about life expectancy of the Vertex Prime.

Mr. Dunkley said the Vertex Prime has a useful life of 12 – 15 years which is better than what we currently have.

Mr. Mulrenan commented on the use the field has gotten over the years; it has been day in and day out with the high school and the community for sports.

Mr. Mulrenan asked Mr. Dunkley to speak to the maintenance.

Mr. Dunkley said we have the equipment at the high school to maintain this. For repair work it is covered for 8 years under warranty. After the 8 years we will bring the manufacturer back in for repair work. They will also come out once a year to do super maintenance.

Mr. Kisiel asked about outside groups using the field and how this would affect rentals.

Mr. Duran is aware of this and is in charge of the rentals. This work will be done after the two events that are already scheduled.

Ms. Chisholm said this was discussed in finance tonight and it was approved to come to the full committee tonight for approval so Mr. Dunkley can get this out to bid.

Ms. Chisholm made a motion to approve the project to go to bid for \$650,000.00; half will come from our rental and half will come from our city.

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

Dr. Wells on the motion; could the Mayor be contacted to tell him this project has time constraints, so we can get this done so it does not impact sports in the fall.

Chairperson Crowley will inform the Mayor that this is a timely situation.

Chairperson Crowley asked Mr. Dunkley if there are any safety concerns that could arise for students if we do not do this.

Mr. Dunkley said the issue is that you have more potential for injuries. The fiber is becoming weaker and is not holding the infield mix. If a player falls, the infill will move more than it should.

You don't have the right grip which could cause a student to fall. The seams are ripping and if a cleat gets stuck it could cause a student athlete to fall.

NESDEC REPORT

Superintendent Crowley began by saying the New England School Development Council was commissioned to conduct a ten-year enrollment projection for the District with demographic enhancement. Data was obtained from the Mass. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Schools; the U.S. Census Bureau and its ongoing updates in the American Community Survey (ACS); as well as real estate data from the Warren Group, Banker & Tradesman. Information on residential construction and proposals still entering the planning pipeline was obtained from the Woburn Planning Department with the help of Tina Cassidy and Dan Orr. Woburn Realtors provided information on the strong real estate market. Dr. Crowley thanked everyone who helped put this together. This report was launched in late summer and is reflective of the information provided through October 30, 2019. The reason for this is we are trying to collect data because there is a significant amount of building that is happening in the city. We are trying to see what the student yield is as a result of all of his building, we are trying to be proactive the best we can. A lot of these buildings are already in progress, and we are trying to anticipate potential growth of the school system and that is what this report does. Dr. Crowley opened it up for questions.

Dr. Wells commented that one highlight is the projection in 2029 that we will have a certain number of students.

Dr. Crowley said the projected enrollment by 2029 will be 321 new students; 7.4% increase in the number of students that will potentially be in the Woburn Public Schools.

We are talking about a significant amount of students.

Dr. Wells looked at the demographics of the city's population, and he is looking at prime years for having children and the population decreased during those years. He is trying to figure out where those children are coming from.

Ms. Sprague said they looked at national data and there are a lot of grandparents raising their kids.

Dr. Wells said this seems to buck every trend he sees. Colleges are concerned because there are not going to be as many students, and the population in the northeast is generally decreasing. The proof will ultimately be in the statistics that come out.

Dr. Crowley responded by looking at page 41 which talks about the status quo; if there was no building in Woburn, we would stand to lose 8.4 % or 367 kids.

Dr. Wells said it is a guess. We don't want to go build a school based on this. His suggestion is to start looking at numbers when they come up in 2021 and 2022 and see how they look in comparison to this report.

Mr. Lipsett said the report does not factor in the rental population. Is there any information on whether we could expect that population to increase or decrease?

Dr. Crowley said that question was asked, and they can't predict how many people will become landlords or home occupied. Someone could buy a three-bedroom condo and rent that out to a family.

Dr. Wells commented that the population in the city is aging. Things could change with the aging population in not supporting our schools because they have no kids or relatives in the schools. We need to make sure we have the support from those that don't have kids in the schools.

Right now we're getting a lot of support from the community that don't have kids in the schools. What is the benefit of investing in our schools ?

Dr. Crowley said a tangible benefit is that the cost of their home increases with a good school system. In 2018 the median single-family home was \$485,000.00 and in 2019 it was \$505,000.00.

Mr. Lipsett commented that although we are seeing an increase in the value of our homes, our high-need population is growing. Being able to manage the needs of our students alongside potentially parents who may not be sending their children to Woburn Public Schools is something we need to keep an eye on.

Ms. Chisholm commented on the estimate with the census from 2020 to 2025 with all the building going on they only expect 1800 more people in the city, and she thinks it would be a lot more than that, with all the building going on in the city, it seems low.

Dr. Crowley said they did ask about it and said they were using the 2010 census.

Mr. Lipsett asked if, when the 2020 census is complete, is there an opportunity to go back to NESDEC to have them make adjustments?

Dr. Crowley said yes, we have an ongoing relationship with them.

Mr. Mulrenan asked that the NESDEC Report be put on the Woburn Public Schools website.

Dr. Crowley is happy to do so.

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

Dr. Wells said if we build a new school, it will be a five-year process. The next school to be built would be Altavesta/Linscott, we don't want to put this off. If this projection is true, we need to keep this conversation going.

Dr. Crowley said even our newer buildings require some capital expense. We are trying to proactively create a 5-year capital plan. This report will help to impact our planning and capacity.

We need to address the reality of our kids and look at where space is available.

Chairperson Crowley asked Dr. Crowley at this point are we able to handle a bump, is there space?

Dr. Crowley said there is currently space. No school is maxed out.

Mr. Kisiel asked about MSBA when they made their projections, how did they come up with their numbers?

Mr. Mulrenan said MSBA does have a formula and when you use their funds, you use their formula. Our schools need to be bigger, but whatever MSBA needs to get our reimbursement, we stick to the formula MSBA uses. This could change at the direction of the council.

Mr. Kisiel asked if we could contribute money

Ms. Chisholm commented that when the Malcolm White school was being built, there was a big push to make it bigger and it was going to be a crazy cost. We would have lost out.

Dr. Wells the Linscott is relatively new. There was a fire in the 1980s that was essentially rebuilt. It would be best to put money into that.

Dr. Wells asked if we have an update once a year on the numbers. Use this report to compare the actual numbers of kids in the school.

Chairperson Crowley said she would put out population data in the fall.

WMHS PROGRAM OF STUDIES

Ms. Sprague spoke of the last Curriculum sub-committee meeting. Principal Callanan and Guidance Coordinator Mrs. Donovan were both in attendance and presented a list of new courses proposed for the 2020-21 school year at Woburn Memorial High School. Each course was broken down by the department. These proposed courses are independent of the budget cycle. If an increase in courses requires additional staffing, it will be reflected in the proposed district budget.

If there is a lack of demand or staffing a course(s) will not run. There are 22 new proposed courses.

Mr. Kisiel wanted to know how they came up with courses to add.

Ms. Sprague said there are meetings with department heads and curriculum coordinators.

Dr. Wells said Ms. Callanan is realigning some pathways.

Mr. Lipsett commented on one of the proposed changes. It is a shift in the history pathway.

World History will move to the 9th grade, US History will move to 10th and 11th. There are a couple of reasons for this. One is that it better matches the new state frameworks for history and social science and the other is that this better reflects what our neighboring districts are doing. It

also allows us to move AP History to 11th grade which is more helpful to the students in 11th grade.

Ms. Chisholm questioned the additional staffing that will be needed. Will we know by the time we go to budget what that will be?

Ms. Sprague said there are two part-time positions at the high school: foreign language and fine arts. Ms. Callanan is currently requesting to increase that. All the other courses they are able to manage with the staffing they have. There are some courses that are under subscribed that they will do away with and some of these new courses will take their place.

Chairperson Crowley said that approving this does not have budget implications.

Mr. Lipsett wanted to point out that the benefits down the line of the .5 theater person are some really cool theater courses.

Dr. Wells made a motion to approve the New Course Summary for the Program of Studies (2020-2021).

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

Chairperson Crowley thanked Ms. Callanan for a job well done.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Subcommittee

Ms. Chisholm met tonight.

They discussed the list of bills and the balance of accounts.

A motion was made to approve the list of bills.

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

A motion was made to approve the balance of accounts.

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

Mr. Dunkley gave some utility projections; we have gone down in usage.

They discussed the athletic fields.

Resource & Capital Planning Subcommittee

Dr. Wells said they met on 1/22/2020.

They talked about the athletic fields.

They discussed plans for the dugouts for the baseball team and are looking for quotes.

The girls' softball team plays at the Library field and that property is not ours. For equity, we may want to talk to the recreation department.

Installation for solar at the Goodyear is coming soon.

There is a space issue that will hit this fall. Preschool numbers are increasing and preschool space will be needed. The administration is reviewing some possibilities. We may need some help from the Mayor.

Old Wyman hinges on what plans we have for preschool.

Personnel Subcommittee

Mr. Mulrenan said they met tonight.

He will present the minutes at the next meeting.

Curriculum and Data Trends Subcommittee

Ms. Crowley said she changed the name of the committee because we are now a district looking at data.

Mr. Lipsett said they met on 1/22/20.

Ms. Callanan provided an overview of proposed changes to the WMHS Program of Studies for the 2020-2021 school year.

The subcommittee voted to recommend the WMHS Program of Studies to the full committee.

Ms. Sprague updated the subcommittee on a recent report on Woburn's Middle Schools. The recent contract with the WTA allowed for the creation of a committee to look into changing the Middle School schedule; before this will begin in earnest, a working group is engaging in a visioning session with staff and administration focusing on creating a vision statement and educational philosophy for the Middle Schools.

Departments are in different stages of curriculum mapping using Atlas software. ELA, Math, and Science are in Stage 3. Other departments are working on Stage 2, listing possible assessments to be used in academic units.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has inquired if the Woburn Schools are interested in piloting a new Science MCAS which would assess deeper learning skills; instead of two days of the older MCAS version, students in fifth and eighth grades would spend a day on the old version and a day testing an old model. Reporting would be done only on the data from the existing model, rather than the pilot portion. Ms. Sprague asked for approval to send a letter to DESE expressing interest in such a pilot program, and the subcommittee voted 3-0 in favor.

Policy and Safety Subcommittee

Chairperson Crowley said she added safety to the subcommittee because we have a fairly new police chief. She thought it would be a good goal for the subcommittee to meet with him to reinforce the safety things that happened between the police and the school department.

Mr. Kisiel said they will be meeting on February 5th.

Chairperson Crowley asked if we have an updated policy on bullying. Dr. Baldassarre commented that we have accepted the changes that counsel has recommended.

It is still on the table.

Chairperson Crowley said we will bring the bullying policy to the full committee at the next meeting.

Student Services & Achievement Subcommittee

Ms. Cormier said they met on 1/22/20.

There was an update from Ms. Ryan. There are 80 students out of district. Things are working well with the GAIN program. They are working on ESY programming. They posted a position for two co-coordinators.

She is looking into visual services as that is an area that needs to be filled.

The position for Pre-K Coordinator will be posted soon.

Update from Ms. Ryan — 80 students out of district.

SEPAC — midyear update January 21st.

Recreation Department and accessibility for programming for children with disabilities. Ms. Rory Lindstrom will be meeting with SEPAC

Update from Adrianna Mendez-Sheldon, Family and Community Engagement Liaison. Her office hours at the Woburn Public Library will be 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Monday – Friday.

Preschool — 200 students now; looking forward at enrollment coming in.

Looking at tech devices for students. For example in the ACE program it might be helpful to have some MP3 players.

Bullying policy was discussed — it needs to be brought back to the table.

The lunch debt was discussed.

Mr. Mulrenan commented that there are a lot of success stories going on in some SpEd programs.

Chairperson Crowley asked Ms. Cormier and her subcommittee to take a look at suicide prevention and what we are doing as a district. (per a request from a parent)

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to send a letter of congratulations to Coach Mike Parziale on his 100th win for coaching the WMHS Wrestling Team.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ms. Crowley made a motion for school tours to be held on February 29, 2020 for purposes of capital planning. The goal is to look physically at all the schools.

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

Dr. Crowley said there are 10 schools, and he envisions an opportunity to walk through all the schools. TBD and Dr. Crowley will send out an itinerary.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Polar Plunge

Annie Jr. at WMHS; February 7th and 8th

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chairperson Crowley

-Old Wyman

Dr. Crowley

-Student Opportunity Act

Dr. Wells

-State Representatives to come in to speak

Dr. Wells

-Review the absentee rate of staff; substitute coverage, are we paying our subs enough

Chairperson Crowley

-Middle School update

Ms. Chisholm made a motion to adjourn.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Jean MacLeod

Recording Secretary