

WOBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
September 10, 2019

A Regular Meeting of the Woburn School Committee was held on September 10, 2019 at the Joyce Middle School Conference Room, 55 Locust Street, Woburn, MA beginning at 7:00pm.

There was a moment of silence for Mrs. Nancy Hubbard, who taught first grade at Wyman School for over 25 years.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Chisholm-Present, Ms. Crowley-Present, Mr. Demers-Present, Mr. Kisiel-Present, Mr. Metters-Present, Dr. Wells-Present, Chairman Mulrenan-Present

APPROVAL OF RECORDS

There were none.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Elections will be held next week at the high school.
Two representatives will be selected.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

There were none.

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON

Mr. Concannon was in attendance with no formal report.

REPORTS/PRESENTATION OF SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF

UPDATE ON FACILITIES AND SUMMER WORK

Mr. Dunkley could not be in attendance tonight.
Dr. Crowley said all the schools look incredible.
The custodial and facilities staff did an amazing job throughout the summer.
Mr. Dunkley's flexibility and willingness to go above and beyond is appreciated.
Our kids and staff are the beneficiaries of great, clean learning environments.
Altavesta celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. Hurld Wyman is celebrating its 2nd anniversary.

Mr. Elia spoke of the issue at Hurld Wyman. There was a major glycol leak from the cooling loop on the second floor. After the initial cleanup, a claim was opened with our insurance carrier. Damaged ceiling tiles have been replaced and damaged walls painted. Service Master was brought in to do a thorough and final cleaning. The rubber flooring in room 2403 and the wooden flooring and risers for the stage had to be ripped out and replaced. The school was able to open, however there is still work to be completed.

During the summer months our custodial staff thoroughly cleaned their schools — lights, walls, furniture and floors. All flags were replaced at the end of August.

Ms. Chisholm asked about the pathway that was cleared at the Altavesta and said she would like to keep a watch on it. She also asked about the water filling station at the Kennedy; is there one at the Joyce? Mr. Elia said they are working on getting them in all schools.

She also commented on the Special Education office and how great it looks.

Dr. Wells asked about the furniture that was donated. Dr. Crowley said the furniture was very nice and the company commented on how professional Dave Dunkley was. He is very professional and always shows up when he says he will.

Dr. Wells asked about the landscaping upkeep for Hurld Wyman. The amount of landscaping is enormous. We should discuss this at a resource subcommittee meeting. Mr. Elia agreed.

Mr. Kisiel asked about the painters and how this was looked at as a potential full time position in the past. Mr. Elia said we did sub out some work and that some custodians were able to do a bit of painting. Mr. Kisiel asked about the cost of the painting. Mr. Elia will find out.

Ms. Crowley asked Mr. Elia if he knew what caused the glycol leak. Mr. Elia said there was a pipe joint that did not hold. He said the only cost to us would be a deductible of \$25,000.00.

Ms. Chisholm asked about the 25,000.00. Why do we have a deductible on a brand new school and why is it not covered under the warranty? Mr. Elia said this is being looked into by both us and the city solicitor.

Ms. Chisholm said there have been comments on social media; when kids are getting dismissed from high school, people are not stopping at the crosswalk. Maybe the city can put up a sign.

Mr. Demers suggested reaching out to Chief Rufo to do a traffic report.

Mr. Metters urged citizens to please get that information to folks that can act upon it.

Putting it on social media is not an effective means to get the information to us.

Ms. Chisholm made a motion to send a letter of thanks to the custodian staff.

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

Dr. Crowley mentioned the solar project at the Joyce that happened over the summer.

He also said they broke ground for the Reeves playground and this should be up and running in a few weeks. This is the preschool playground.

OVERVIEW ON OPENING DAY

Dr. Crowley said overall we had an incredible opening. There were a couple of hiccups with transportation. Dr. Crowley met with principals earlier this morning, and they all agreed it was a great opening day. It was exciting to see the kids in the classroom. Dr. Crowley has been to every school at least once. He believes we set the tone very well. Teachers are encouraged. He said there were two different groups he wanted to talk about; one was kids and the other staff. On September 3rd the staff got together at the high school and the purpose was to “Learn Together” through memories and defining moments. This year we thought differently about how to use the time and create a memory for Woburn Public Schools together.

The goal was to help build and strengthen relationships, increase collaboration, engage in our community, and have fun.

Meet the Central Office Team. Dr. Crowley did a presentation showing all the work that was done during the summer. The Leadership team read the book “dare to lead” by Brene Brown. Dr. Crowley held a 3-day retreat for administrators. He shared with them that he wants them to take risks in the classroom. They talked about how learning is supposed to be messy.

Last spring, Ms. Thifault and Ms. Young asked to meet with Dr. Crowley. They talked about the first day of school for teachers and asked if he had a plan yet. He told them no, and they told him they wanted to do something spectacular. They started having conversations about what this would look like. It was quite a process. The “Learn Together” day began with a staff meeting at the high school. The marching band played. There were buses waiting to take them to the Boys and Girls Club. There were hands on collaborative activities and community partners were there. We had a police escort to and from. Dr. Crowley introduced Ms. Thifault.

Ms. Thifault began by saying thanking the administration team for allowing her to do this. She said we have been doing the same thing on opening day for 25 years. Ms. Young and Ms. Thifault wanted to do a surprise and did a pitch to Dr. Crowley and Ms. Sprague. This took around 300 hours to plan. A great day to LEARN TOGETHER was the theme for Opening Day 2019. Ms. Thifault put together a video of Learn Together Day.

It had to be a surprise until the very end. The band kids got up at 6:00 in the morning to play. The adventure sheet covered all disciplines at all grade levels. They wanted to make sure everyone had a chance to participate in at least three sessions. For example, you could do robotics, play corn hole, and then go have a smoothie. Community groups were brought in to bring everyone together. This gave the staff a chance to chat with the Library and WCEF. The staff was truly surprised and thankful. The feedback was positive. Everyone has said what a great idea this was, and they all had a great time. Ms. Thifault gave a big thank you to Julie Gage of the Boys and Girls Club for all of her time and help. She worked with us the entire time. Dr. Crowley commented on how the spirit was there and the media center will be making a film of the whole day. Ms. Thifault and Ms. Young will follow through for the rest of the year. They

are sending out surveys, and they plan on having challenges with our community groups. We want the branding of “Learn Together” to go through the whole year.

Ms. Crowley asked for an update on art and music in the district. Ms. Thifault hired 2 new art teachers at the elementary level and 2 new music teachers. We have a % band teacher. We have a new part-time theater person, starting with stage management and drama program. People are very excited about having more Arts and Music in the schools. We have a lot of new things planned.

Dr. Wells requested to have the video put on the school's web page to show the enthusiasm as a good recruiting tool.

Dr. Crowley spoke of enrollment over the summer. Our demographics have shifted. We have an incredibly diverse and challenging student population that we need to meet the needs of. Things are changing pretty quickly, including when people decide to enroll in school. When numbers shift over the summer, it is hard to predict. He discussed this with his leadership team and everyone is keeping a look at the enrollment figures diligently. We are trying to make sure the students are receiving the best possible education they can in an appropriate class size.

Dr. Crowley put in an early budget plug for a central registration.

Ms. Crowley suggested we look at every single school to look at space. Maybe give the SC members a break down of classroom sizes and what the maximum capacity is. Dr. Crowley said we do not have a space issue. We are waiting to hear back from NESDEC on a demographic study. We expect to have this report in early October. The space issue for this year is ok; it is more of a function of staff.

Dr. Wells said we want to look at the use of space. We can have 25 students in a classroom but can we fit 25. We want to look at the classroom structure.

Dr. Wells wants to figure out how to increase our knowledge in finding out how new students who move in over the summer know when the first day of school is. It would be interesting to delve deeper into this. How do they know when the first day of school is but do not know how to reach out to the school system? Is it through word of mouth? He suggested reaching out to the newly enrolled high school students. Dr. Crowley said one of the factors is lease agreements beginning on Sept. 1st. We can't enroll them until they provide proof of residence. That was one of the reasons people waited to enroll.

Ms. Sprague said another piece of enrollment figures right now are those who don't let us know they are leaving.

Ms. Chisholm spoke of her idea to leave pamphlets in real estate offices with information on how to contact the schools. She also has concern for those students who don't show up.

Dr. Crowley said we do follow up with those students. The new school will request the release of records from Woburn.

Ms. Chisholm asked if we have budget money left in case we do have to hire additional staff.

Mr. Elia said we are working on that now, there are still some vacant positions, and he does not have a final number right now.

Ms. Chisholm feels a number isn't a number for a lot of classes; it is the makeup of a classroom for our kids across our district. She does not want people to think they are ignoring the emails and letters that we are getting with concerns about class sizes. In Woburn we have always been proud of our smaller classroom sizes. She does not want people to think we are not addressing these issues. We need to hang on to the old Wyman building and not use it. Maybe move administration over there.

Mr. Metters feels we need to hang onto the old Wyman so that space could easily be used by administration.

Mr. Metters mentioned that the committee did receive some parent letters, and he asked parents to be patient with regard to bus stops and that enrollment was changing hourly. He also commented on the opening day video and suggested this could be used as a merchandising leverage. He would encourage that.

Dr. Wells does not want to hold onto the old Wyman, but we will look at this down the road. He reiterated that the 25 student limits are under contract and recalled a discussion with Ms. Sprague, who mentioned a study that said the difference is only if the number is below 10 students or over 40 students is when a class size will have an impact we are seeing larger classes for the first time and this is what happens when you consolidate schools.

Mr. Metters mentioned he was redistricted as a child, and he is here to tell us that kids are resilient. We need to look at how best to use our facilities and resources. Redistricting is something we might need to do.

Mr. Demers stated class sizes might have grown, but we have created and developed more support in the classroom. Our teachers are going to get better with the support in the classroom. He feels teachers are very competent right now. Teachers will tell you some years you have a classroom that has different needs that need to be addressed and the next year was easier. He also said we are trying to come up with solutions. Moving forward, we need to reach out to folks and get their input to be part of the process. Posting things on Facebook or social media is not a way to get information or parent concerns to our elected officials. We need to make the lines of communication stronger. Student growth is staggering.

Ms. Crowley suggested that after looking at the space at each school, the SC needs to look at the data that will be provided by administration.

Ms. Chisholm would like Chairman Mulrenan to respond to the correspondence by email.

Mr. Mulrenan has responded to those emails. He wants the public to know everyone is working hard. Later on tonight Chairman Mulrenan will address a couple of parent letters and emails under Correspondence.

Ms. Chisholm does not want parents to think they can't reach out to the school committee.

Dr. Wells feels we should abide by the contractual numbers. We need to be fair to the entire district. We should deal with the limits that are set by contracts instead of adding teachers to break the contractual limits.

TCIS UPDATE

TCIS stands for Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools. This is a very powerful program. Dr. Baldassarre passed out a handout of the participants who completed the 40-hour training of the Woburn TCIS Course. The TCIS Leadership Team is composed of Dr. Baldassarre, Ms. Sprague, Ms. Callanan, Mr. Kessarlis, Mr. Nickerson and Ms. Young. They are all certified as TCIS trainers. Dr. Baldassarre was previously certified and the others completed the 40-hour training session at Hurld Wyman between August 12th and August 16th. He is glad to have this level of support for our faculty and staff. Training is split into three areas:

Woburn TCIS Course I: Pre-Crisis Planning and Understanding (4 hours)

Woburn TCIS Course II: Listening and Responding to Students (4 hours)

Woburn TCIS Course III: Recovery (4 hours)

Full TCIS Certification without Physical Interventions (21 hours)

(To be administered in accordance with requirements set forth by the Residential Child Care Project at Cornell University)

Full TCIS Certification with Physical Interventions (28 hours)

(To be administered in accordance with requirements set forth by the Residential Child Care Project at Cornell University)

Cornell training is different from any other training. It is not someone standing in front of you and talking. This is where role-playing and feedback is given. For all the skills we teach them, they do it three times. Once as a child, once as an adult, and once as an observer. The final component is recovery, this is after a stressful situation takes place with a child, and the adult goes through a seven step cognitive behavioral process to teach the child a new skill. What will we do differently the next time the same stressful situation comes up?

Dr. Wells asked if this training would be equally effective for children who are 6-8 years old because there seems to be some introspection that would be required.

Dr. Baldassarre replied by saying we have very few physical restraints in Woburn. The physical restraint program is certified for children ages 5-22. Teaching adults how to use facial expressions goes below 5 years old and into our preschool program.

Ms. Chisholm said this is something additional that teachers are doing in the classroom that is different, and we need to take that into consideration when talking about classroom sizes.

Dr. Crowley mentioned that there were members of the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA who participated in the training. They put in 40 hours total to participate in the 21-hour training.

UPDATE ON NEW HIRES

Mr. Elia passed out a listing of new staff hires to SC members.

New Hires:

19 Teachers

11 Paraprofessionals

1 Custodian

10 Special Education staff members, including one Director

3 Technology staff members, including one Director

1 Principal

1 Secretary

1 Social Worker

1 Adjustment Counselor

There are six positions that have not been filled that we are in the process of trying to hire for.

No questions were asked.

Mr. Elia will put together a total number on the hiring in a couple of weeks.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Subcommittee

Dr. Wells said they met this evening.

They did not have a list of bills or a balance of accounts.

They reviewed the end of the year balance of accounts.

One of the things that did come up with the reorganization of the Special Education Department.

Dr. Baldassarre presented some outstanding bills to the committee.

They were taken care of with the changeover. These bills amounted to \$10,580.01.

We talked about what is put in place now. We have coordinators that will be monitoring the outsourced placements. There will be communications with the SpEd department and Mr. Elia's office.

It was determined that Rockland Trust would remain at the high school.

Mr. Demers wanted to clarify why the subcommittee, which did not have a list of bills or the balance of accounts, was because of a Munis issue on the city side and not our finance department.

Ms. Crowley asked where they left off with Interface.

Dr. Wells answered that they left it here because Ms. Crowley was not at the last meeting, and she could present something at the next meeting.

Resource Subcommittee

Mr. Kisiel said they did not meet.

Personnel Subcommittee

Ms. Chisholm was not able to attend.

A meeting was held on 9/4/19.

Mr. Demers was in attendance for Ms. Chisholm.

The topic of the discussion was the employee handbook review.

Our attorneys will take a look at a few edits where Mass. General laws could be added to the handbook to make sure we are in accordance with state laws and also with similar policies that the city side does with city employees and other departments.

Ms. O'Neil is working with Ms. Judkins in the technology department to develop a Google doc for an acknowledgment signature for all employees, so we can keep a good track and to make sure all employees have also acknowledged the appropriate use of technology in the district.

A decision was made that no hire will be made at this time for the assistant principal at the Reeves. Dr. Crowley said this decision came about today. This will be re-posted as an interim position. We would rather wait to get the right person.

Our ELL coordinator is retired and this position has to be re posted. This is a high priority.

Dr. Crowley is conducting a review of the districts after school programming.

He wants to make sure all students have equal access and are afforded the same benefits as every school that has after school programs.

Curriculum and Professional Development Subcommittee

Mr. Demers said they will meet on 9/18/19 at 8:00am.

The middle school report is on the list of topics.

Curriculum Coordinators will be there to give an update.

Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Crowley said they are meeting on 9/18/19.

LGBTQ policy and their vision is one topic on the agenda and another topic is service animals.

Dr. Wells would like the policy subcommittee to take a look to see if MASC has any policies the school committee did not receive as we are paying them a fee for their service.

Dr. Baldassarree is taking care of this; it is just a matter of reestablishing our relationship.

Student Services and Achievement Subcommittee

Mr. Metters said they met on September 6, 2019.

A lot of ground was covered during the meeting. There was a lot of cleaning up in the special education department. There have been a number of new hires in the department giving Ms.

Ryan more ways to shape new procedures. There are various programs that need to be

addressed. E.S.Y. is one that needs an overhaul, and Ms. Ryan is doing an internal evaluation of that, which is nearly complete. We now have a Pre-K Director. The preschool is nearly full. There is some cleanup needed to ensure the data is accurate, and we need to make sure the technology needs for the department are being met. There are a lot of parent meetings going on. The key takeaway is that the SpEd department has a budget of 24 million dollars. This is more than the police, DPW, and the fire department combined. As we look at the budget piece down the road, we fully anticipate there will likely be an ask from Ms. Ryan and the SpEd Dept. SEPAC will be having a meeting on 9/18/19 at 6:30pm at Hurld Wyman. They are looking to increase their group numbers.

Dr. Wells asked about the CPR report. Mr. Metters believes there is one more piece of feedback that is nearly complete.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Mulrenan began by speaking about the documents received from Mr. Brothers and the Woburn Youth Soccer Organization in naming the Paul Sands Hill.

Dr. Wells made a motion to accept the documents from WYS and to make Paul Sands Hill the official name.

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

Email from Ms. Popoloski and Ms. Jennifer Baker Jones.

Mr. Demers made a motion to make these documents a part of the permanent record.

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

Dr. Wells suggested that these documents get turned over to the appropriate subcommittee.

Dr. Wells asked about the mosquito issue in Burlington and is Woburn aware?

Dr. Crowley replied that the athletic director had reached out to the board of health and that we are monitoring it every day.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Back to School Night

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Wells commented on the middle school report and suggested that this be discussed at a subcommittee meeting.

Dr. Wells asked about the Innovation Grant the state is giving out.

Dr. Crowley said we received money to plan a grant and suggested inviting Ms. Gustenhoven, the science curriculum coordinator, to attend a meeting to talk about her plan.

Ms. Chisholm asked that the committee members receive their packets by Friday; this will ensure they have time to read the documents.

Ms. Crowley would like the committee members to have an update on the elementary school changes with the replacement of the Interventionists with the PLC's.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Mulrenan made a motion to adjourn.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean MacLeod

Jean MacLeod

Recording Secretary