

**WOBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
June 4, 2020

A Remote Meeting of the Woburn School Committee was held on June 4, 2020, beginning at 7:30 pm.

Chairperson Crowley took a moment of reflection for families in our community that may be suffering due to the Coronavirus.

**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 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.

In addition this meeting will be live streamed on WPMC; if your face is being shown your face will be recorded.

**BUDGET DELIBERATIONS**

Chairperson Crowley began by stating this is the 9th budget meeting that the school committee has conducted. Six were held in regular meetings and two were held in subcommittee meetings. On or about May 14th the school committee directed the administration to produce a 4% budget. They did so and at the last meeting we heard some feedback from Mayor Scott Galvin who gave the school committee a spending limit of 3.8% in addition we are receiving money from congress to alleviate some COVID-19 related expenses that the school district has to incur. Chairperson Crowley turned to Dr. Crowley for any updates or adjustments made to the administration's proposals for budget adjustments.

Dr. Crowley agrees it has been quite a process to get to 3.8%. Since the last public meeting adjustments were made to the line items. At the last meeting; May 28, 2020 we were at 4.284%. We were able to get it down to 3.786%. The target was 3.8%. We came in just below the prescribed number. Over the past couple of days we reduced by \$327,000. Dr. Crowley walked the committee through the reductions.

The Curriculum Coordinator position was reintroduced as a cut. This was a tough one, Dr. Crowley believes strongly that we need curriculum coordination in the Woburn Public Schools,

but Dr. Crowley wanted to be consistent in his message to the committee and to the public that if we had to do without; we could do without this position.

The lunch monitors at \$76,000; Dr. Crowley understands that these are people who have part-time jobs in the Woburn Public Schools. We don't know what school is going to look like in September. Dr. Crowley is hearing that we probably won't have traditional lunch as we currently know it; which is why again this was put out as a cut.

We are going to do some restructuring within the SpEd department. As we have gone through this process everyone now sees the SpEd department is a big cost center for the Woburn Public Schools. We need to be very efficient and smart on how we run that department. Some of the things we are going to do are reallocation and the shifting of some programs to some extent.

This will allow us not to hire two paraprofessional positions; coming from the Linscott and Shamrock. They will have para's it will be different people. We are not filling these positions.

The SpEd consulting line item, one of the things we were budgeting for is the idea of testing.

Since we have closed the federal government has asked us to maintain the pace of testing.

Many families have agreed to put off testing. We feel we can save some money on the testing line item. Adjust Open BCBA positions to Step M-1.

June 4, 2020 Post Public Hearing Reductions:

Eliminate Curriculum Coordinator	\$95,000.00
Reduce Lunch Monitors by 50%	\$76,852.00
Adjust Open BCBA positions to Step M-1	\$51,345.00
Reduce SPED Consulting Line Item	\$47,748.00
Do not hire for Retiring Paraprofessional	\$34,112.00
Do not hire for Retiring Paraprofessional	<u>\$22,397.00</u>
<u>Total Reductions</u>	<u>\$327,454.00</u>

Dr. Crowley said none of this is easy. Administration has done everything they can to stay away from the classrooms. We are doing our best to preserve and protect our teachers, nurses and paraprofessionals. Dr. Crowley thanked Mr. Elia and the whole administration team for all of their hard work. It has been a collaborative effort. He hopes the school committee will support the recommended cuts and get us to the 3.8% number.

Chairperson Crowley appreciates all of the hard work done by the administration. She knows this has not been easy and once we do pass the budget more than likely things will change once again. We will come back here to look at different ways to support hybrid learning or however learning will look like September of 2020.

Dr. Wells made a motion to reduce the school budget by \$327,454.00 using the cuts outlined by the Superintendent.

Motion was seconded by Mrs. Chisholm.

Mr. Lipsett, on the motion, thinks the school committee would be remiss without revisiting the potential of fees for sports. He knows it has been a controversial topic but when we are faced

with the decisions we have to make tonight, he thinks it is worth at least putting it back on the table for discussion. If there is a question of jobs or critical positions vs. sports fees it is at least worth discussing.

Dr. Wells withdrew his motion to allow Mr. Lipsett to bring forth his discussion on sports fees. Mr. Lipsett made a motion that we introduce fees for sports in the Woburn Public Schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

Motion was seconded by Ms. Cormier.

Dr. Wells, on the motion, feels public school should be free. If things can't be afforded in the regular budget then they can't be offered. His suggestion is that Woburn Public Schools continue to not have fees for athletics. He can't support this and collecting fees could be a headache.

Ms. Cormier, on the motion, is not convinced there will be any fall sports so this could be a moot point. It is not something we can rely on right now. If we take the charge out now we probably will not be charging anything anyways because sports will not be happening. She would like to have the working idea that things will be returning to normal but she feels the committee is pretty confident there not. She understands the logistics but believes it will wind up as a wash.

Mr. Mulrenan, on the motion, Ms. Cormier makes a great point. We have so many unknowns and things we need to visit prior to September.

Mrs. Chisholm, on the motion, at this point, would not add to anybody's household expenses and create a burden for families. Tonight we need a budget. We need to put this on the back burner for now. If we want to really visit this we can do it when the new norm comes back.

We can revisit this through a subcommittee then bring it to the full committee and get some input from parents, coaches and Jim Duran. We need to know how we are actually going to do it before we bring it back to the full committee for a vote. Mrs. Chisholm would not support adding any fees to athletics at this time.

Mr. Lipsett withdrew his motion. He just wanted to make sure the committee fully investigated every possible revenue before they made some difficult cuts.

Chairperson Crowley said this topic is very much a live issue. It is being discussed at a subcommittee level. Sometimes the best way to go about things if we are going to completely change the way in which we do policy, is to go through a subcommittee, get studied, and have opportunity for public comment before we make drastic changes.

Mr. Mulrenan thanked Dr. Crowley and all the efforts of his team. He asked Dr. Crowley if he could elaborate on the elimination of the curriculum coordinator position. Dr. Crowley said all of these have been difficult decisions. This position was put out there previously so he wanted to maintain this as an option for the committee. Dr. Crowley's hope is, as we get more information about what school will look like when we reopen, if there are savings that we can acquire somewhere in the summer, he would be able to come back to the committee and add in that position. He feels it is vital to have curriculum alignment in a system our size which is why over

the past 4 years Dr. Crowley has been working diligently and supportive of this effort. Can we do without it, yes. Is it a good thing, probably not.

Mrs. Chisholm commented that this cut was from administration. We had cuts from SpEd, technology, and across the board. This was the opportune time as no one is losing a job. That person in that position is going back to the classroom. It's not like we are eliminating a person's job. The fairest time would be now.

Dr. Wells made a motion to reduce the school budget by \$327,454.00 using the cuts outlined by the Superintendent.

Motion was seconded by Mrs. Chisholm.

Chairperson Crowley asked for clarification. If the committee makes these cuts and/or support these savings, if we run into a savings down the road, the curriculum coordinator position would be the first one to come back to the school committee as an add back in.

Dr. Crowley said that is what he would recommend but we don't know what is going to happen.

Chairperson Crowley emphasized that this budget is very fluid unlike other years.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes Motion passed 7-0.

#### **FINAL VOTE on FY 2021 BUDGET**

Dr. Wells made a motion to approve a FY 21 Budget of \$68,238,272.00.

On the motion, Dr. Wells took some time to reflect a little bit. The Mayor was at the last meeting and complemented Chairperson Crowley on being a strong advocate for the school department.

Everyone has done their job; the mayor is a good steward of the city's money. We are lucky the community supports the school system. Dr. Wells congratulated the new members on getting through their first budget. Everybody is working together to do what's best for the citizens of Woburn and for the school children of Woburn and this budget reflects that.

No further discussion or deliberations on this motion.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes Motion passed 7-0.

Chairperson congratulated everybody as this was a true achievement and thanked the full committee for their hard work.

Chairperson Crowley thanked the administration for putting in hours upon hours that they put in to give us what we need, to answer our questions and to really prepare a budget that is truly reflective not only of our fiscal situation but also in the best interest of our students and student achievement.

Dr. Crowley thanked the committee and all of the elected officials of the City of Woburn. We are doing our best for the kids, that is what it's all about. We are onto our next challenge which will be planning for next year. Dr. Crowley genuinely thanked Joe Elia who is retiring after 20 years of service to the Woburn Public Schools.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to adjourn.

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

**ROLL CALL**

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jean MacLeod*

Jean MacLeod

Recording Secretary