

Wellfleet School Committee
May 8, 2018

Present for the Committee: Jan Plaue, Mort Inger, Jill Putnam (left at 6:18 p.m.), Betsy Pontius and Martha Gordon

Present for the Administration: Thomas Conrad, Giovanna Venditti, Mary Beth Rodman

Call to Order

Chair Plaue called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Chair's Report

Jan Plaue was pleased to announce that Town Meeting went well for the school. Principal Rodman, Superintendent Conrad and Giovanna Venditti were in attendance.

Members Speak

Betsy Pontius distributed an article from Education Week, "Quality is Crucial to Obtaining Benefits from PreK."

Martha Gordon reminded the Committee of the "Tools of the Mind" workshop at Orleans Elementary School.

Citizens Speak – None

Written Agreement– Wellfleet Montessori School –

Committee members reviewed the draft agreement. The Superintendent and Principal will finalize the agreement and bring it to the next meeting for approval and signature.

Administrative Reports

Principal Rodman's report was included in the packet. She highlighted the BUGS recipients and invited the committee to the Staff Appreciation Day on Thursday, May 10th. She also informed the Committee that she has applied for registration for the after school program from the Department for Elementary and Secondary Education. She was contacted by Suzanne Thomas indicating there was a grant that she could apply for relative to after school services. She applied for the \$5,000 grant which will help with transitional support. She also reported on the resignation of staff member Mollie Whiting who is pursuing an Applied Behavior Analyst therapist position at Southcoast Autism Center in Fairhaven, MA. She highlighted the work of Karen Pagano, guest teacher and Peace Club instructor who is leading the WES theme parade titled, All Heart: A Piece of Peace. The parade is Friday, June 8th with a rain date of June 15th.

Assistant Superintendent Gauley's report was sent separately.

Superintendent Conrad reported that the Region School Committee is working hard on their capital plan. They have found a good common ground to move forward. They voted to take air conditioning out of the plan and move \$320,000 forward for work on the Middle

School. He is working hard to help the Finance Committees, Selectmen and Town Administrators understand the language. He also reported that at the Joint meeting we will be Celebrating Excellence, with teachers and employees of the year recipients. There will also be an SEL presentation and the Superintendent's Evaluation. The policies that were brought forward for a first reading are being held as there were some questions raised in other towns, so they are being returned to the Policy Subcommittee for clarification.

FY18 Budget

Giovanna Venditti, Director of Finance and Operations, reported the town has given the school \$48,000 from Free Cash. Jim Nowack will call the Town Accountant to see how to access the funds. There is a -\$32,419 balance but with Circuit Breaker funds in the amount of \$17,051, Fuel Savings of \$15,000 and a Circuit Breaker Adjustment of \$2,054, there will be a balance of \$46,358 to get the school through the next six weeks. Any money remaining will be returned to the town. She indicated that the tuition has been paid to the Cape Cod Collaborative. (Principal Rodman indicated that the recommendation has been made for the student to stay at the Collaborative)

Preschool Survey

Principal Rodman distributed the preschool survey. These have been mailed and distributed at Kindergarten screening. She reported she went through the census for ages 2, 3, and 4.

Chair Plaue indicated that Provincetown will be servicing children from infancy all the way through. This is a lot of competition for the Wellfleet School System. Mort Inger indicated that Provincetown opened this for people who work in Provincetown as well. Jill Putnam asked what happens for children needing childcare in the summer. Principal Rodman will bring results of the survey to the next meeting.

Chair Plaue wondered what next steps would be after the survey is done. She would like to see Wellfleet Elementary School provide preschool in the fall of 2019. A lot of this has to do with timing. With Provincetown doing what they are doing and Social Emotional Learning paramount for children, she felt the children would be better served in the school system. She stated the committee has a responsibility to keep our young people in town. By providing PreK and keeping vouchers for 3 year olds, Wellfleet is doing as much as we can. At the Joint School Committee meeting Brewster was interested in public PreK as well. She does not want to wait for the other towns to start this initiative but wants WES to move forward. Betsy Pontius brought up the fact that this would increase the Principal's workload. Principal Rodman indicated that the time is now, especially with competition from Provincetown. She is comfortable that WES will provide a quality program. It will be more work as she will be the PreK supervisor. The school will have to go through accreditation. She will have to find a classroom teacher who is *Tools of the Mind* trained. A question was raised as to how we look at the Nauset Integrated Preschool Program.

Jill Putnam stated there are a lot of stakeholders in this. We are doing a needs assessment with a lot of variables. She suggested that the Director of Special Needs be involved in this. This must be developmentally appropriate.

The Superintendent suggested that if the Committee wants the program to begin in September 2019, they must back map to see with whom we need to meet. He suggested setting a timetable to make sure everyone is involved in this. Back mapping will give you the pace you need to keep. Make sure we see all the stakeholders. Chair Plaué indicated that the committee has been setting the ground work for a long time. It is a big concern that Wellfleet has lost ten children to the Provincetown district. The Superintendent stated WES can serve our student better with a high quality program. The Committee should put a plan together and roll out of the program will be 2019.

Jill Putnam asked about classroom space and the number of children that would be serviced. She also indicated that transitions are not good for young children. There should be a conversation about what will happen in the summer. Is this something we want to explore? Will this program run through the summer? Do parents have to look for an alternative in the summer? Is this a 9 month program or a 12-month program? Martha Gordon asked if Union members can be contracted for 12 months. Jill Putnam suggested contacting the Recreation Program Director to see about a summer program that would be in the same physical environment. The Superintendent was in agreement and also asked what would happen during school vacations for children.

The list for back mapping should include a meeting with Dr. Caretti, Nancy O'Connell, Montessori School, Selectmen, and Finance Committee etc. It was suggested that at the next meeting members have a list of suggestions. The Committee will also discuss the survey results. Chair Plaué would like to do have everything done by January 1st to have the program start in the fall of 2019. Betsy Pontius asked if there were any resources we might read to prepare ourselves. What do you look for in a high quality program? Jill Putnam suggested looking at the National Association for Education of Young Children website. Chair Plaué indicated the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has an early childhood group that is very progressive. Betsy Pontius suggested the committee prepare an information sheet about the value of Preschool.

Hiring and Background Check Process

The Superintendent explained the current hiring, background check process and what they are working toward in the future. His handouts included the Employment Screening and Background Checks – Outline of Current Process, Employment Screening and Background Checks and a draft of the Teacher Reference Check. The District is thinking about site visits, outside agency to help with background checking as well as police departments. He will continue to fine tune this and bring it forward to the committee. He had a good meeting with the Director of the Cove and Counselors to review District practices. He is focusing on mandated reporting and would like a workshop on this for staff and parents. They continue to discuss how to talk to children.

School Security

The Superintendent stated that Administration and schools have been working on security since Columbine. He met with people from MIT and they are working on a device that would help stop intruders. He also talked about risk factors, security in place, Crisis Go, and being buzzed in and out of school buildings.

IB Discussion

Superintendent Conrad distributed information on the IB program. He reported that Martha Gordon and Jan Plaue visited the Woodrow Wilson IB elementary school with him. Martha Gordon indicated she would like to look at another IB school and suggested visiting Provincetown. Chair Plaue and Martha Gordon felt the teachers acted as facilitators in the program. Principal Rodman indicated that people have had reasons for leaving WES, but never has anyone mentioned it was to attend the IB program.

Reports and Information

Cape Cod Collaborative – no report

PTA – Betsy Pontius reported that the PTA earned \$2,795 on raffle tickets, \$1,700 on meal tickets and \$275 in cash donations. The actual food cost was \$607. The TA is in good shape to donate the \$10,000 that they usually do for next year. The same two or three people work events. WES Fest is coming.

School Council – Principal Rodman reported the Council discussed summer workshops for staff and the Second Step program. They have completed the School Improvement Plan.

Preschool – Report included in packet.

Transportation – No report

Policy – No report

Substance Abuse Task Force – No report.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Betsy Pontius, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of April 10, 2018 as amended.

Adjournment

Mort Inger stated, with no further business to conduct, I motioned to adjourn.

The motion was seconded by Betsy Pontius and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Ann M. Tefft