

WELLFLEET SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, December 13, 2016

Present for the School Committee: Betsy Pontius Jill Putnam, Martha Gordon, Mort Inger and Jan Plaue
Present for the Administration: Thomas Conrad, Superintendent, Giovanna Venditti, Director of Finance and Operations, Dr. Ann Caretti, Mary Beth Rodman, Principal

CALL TO ORDER/AGENDA CHANGES – Chair Jan Plaue called the meeting to order at 4:29 p.m. Chair Plaue informed the committee that the MASC Conference will be added to Reports & Information. Mr. Fred Magee from the Wellfleet Finance Committee was introduced to the Committee.

CHAIR'S REPORT –

Chair Plaue reported that she received a note from the Town Administrator's Office indicating they wanted the School Committee to appear before them this evening to present the budget to Finance Committee and Selectmen. Chair Plaue indicated that the School Committee has always come before them in January. It was noted Wellfleet School Committee will have their public hearing in January for the budget. After that the School Committee will go to the Selectmen's meeting. According to the Charter, the budget is supposed to be submitted by December 1st. Chair Plaue indicated it did not seem like this is possible. She informed the Committee that they will meet on January 24th at 7:00 p.m. at the Wellfleet Council on Aging to present the budget to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee.

Principal Rodman was asked by the Town to give an idea of how much the budget increased and she indicated 5%.

CITIZENS SPEAKS –

Rebecca Dalmas addressed the Committee regarding an accelerated reading technique/program of which she has accumulated testimonies and third party endorsements. She would like to present the program to the Committee again. It was the consensus of the Committee that this could be brought to the District's Curriculum Committee. The Superintendent indicated he could look into it.

PRIORITY BUSINESS

Art Program Fundraiser

Principal Rodman explained the Fundraising idea with Artsonia, an online program for building student art portfolios and making art available to families. Families are able to go online and view their children's artwork and have a mug, notecards, T-shirt, etc. created from the artwork.

Motion:

On a motion by Besty Pontius, seconded by Jill Putnam, it was voted unanimously to approve the art fundraiser.

Principal Rodman indicated that funds raised will go into the gift account.

Administrators' Reports

Principal Rodman's Report

Principal Rodman's report was included in the packet. She also reported that the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) will be visiting all schools in Massachusetts to assess all buildings. They will be at Wellfleet Elementary School on Thursday, December 15th and will walk through the building with the Head Custodian and the Principal. They will also be meeting with the Superintendent. She invited committee members to the Holiday Concert held at the Council on Aging and at school on Thursday evening and Friday afternoon.

Assistant Superintendent's Report:

Assistant Superintendent Keith Gauley's report was included in the packet. Members were very interested in the courses that are being offered on the January Professional Development Day. The Table Top Security Drill was explained by the Superintendent that involved Police, Fire EMT's, District Attorney's Office, FBI and numerous other agencies in a 5 hour session with open discussion.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Conrad reported that he held parent forums in all towns which were well attended and good discussion took place with parents on various topics. Homework was a topic of concern for parents in all towns. He also reported that open gym is moving forward and will start soon. He was pleased to announce that the Nauset Boys' Soccer Team is State Champions, first in New England and 8th in the national polls. Members of the Team made a guest appearance on the Superintendent's Spotlight and were showcased on Channel 5 – High Five. He also reported that the Administrators are well into the budget process and thanked Principal Rodman and Giovanna Venditti for all their efforts.

Strategic Plan

Superintendent Conrad reminded the Committee that the Strategic Plan expires in 2017. In the months to come, he has 6-7 things he feels need work beyond 2017. When those items are completed, he will have further discussions with the Committees. Chair Plaue asked that early childhood education be part of the new Strategic Plan.

Wellness Policy

The Superintendent talked with parents at the Parent Forums about the new Wellness Policy and they understood perfectly the issue. For Curriculum events, food needs to be purchased and requires a label.

Betsy Pontius suggested the biggest change is a cultural one. Classroom celebrations accompanied by food, a portion of the policy, was revised for safety of students. She suggested the Committee approve the policy for a second reading and at some point in the future, it can be wordsmithed.

Motion:

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted unanimously to approve the Wellness Policy for a second reading.

Preschool Program Discussion

Principal Rodman shared the most up-to-date information as it pertains to preschool enrollment with the Committee. Four community friends started two weeks ago and a fifth preschool student is coming into the program.

Chair Plaue reported that she and Martha Gordon went to see Suzanne Thomas, Social Services Committee and person who administers town vouchers for the preschool program. They found out there are 18 four-year olds going one place or another for preschool. Ms. Thomas explained the voucher process to them and they shared it with the Committee. They felt the problem with the Nauset Preschool Program is that it is a four day program and parents need five days. The Children's Place, The Family School, and the Little Island offer five days per week. Vouchers get paid to the schools twice a year from the town of Wellfleet. It was noted that with the \$7,000 voucher, parents can choose somewhere that offers five days as well as a longer day. Martha Gordon indicated she would talk with the CDC about the voucher system.

Mort Inger inquired as to what needs to be done to turn the program into a five day program. Principal Rodman indicated that most public Integrated Preschools are four day programs and that the fifth day is used for assessing, home visits, etc. The Superintendent indicated he will research five-day programs and talk with Dr. Ann Caretti.

Chair Plaue felt the voucher system is working and mentioned that Wellfleet was way ahead of the other towns in the region. The 18 children that are taking advantage of the voucher system go to the Montessori School, The Children's Place, Little Island School, The Family School and Provincetown.

FY17 Budget

Giovanna Venditti reviewed the monthly expenditure report with the Committee highlighting variances in several accounts. Presently the balance is \$20,581.90. Once things are reclassified and savings utilized, the budget balance will be \$43,439. She indicated that she will apply for extraordinary relief. Ms. Venditti explained how money is reclassified. She also indicated that Circuit Breaker funds are distributed quarterly.

FY18 Budget Review

Superintendent Conrad distributed the FY18 budget books. He indicated the Wellfleet has an excellent program and all existing programs are intact. Principal Rodman gave them an overview of the FY18 budget. She indicated that in order to maintain all existing program for all students, the draft budget could not remain within the parameters of a 2.5% increase. In FY17 Wellfleet had 7 other one-time funding sources that were utilized to offset the budget by \$208,865. In FY18, there are only 4 other funding sources totaling \$71,723 to offset the FY18 budget. It was also reported that the Special Needs Program continues to grow. In 2016

the Special Needs population was 19% and next year it will be 23%. The regular day portion of the budget had a 1.41% increase. The total of the FY18 budget has an increase of 4.62%. Eastham Elementary will continue to send a student to the WES program and that child will need a 1-1 Educational Assistant. Wellfleet has one teacher retirement and she explained how that will impact the staffing and assignments.

Mr. Magee, Wellfleet Finance Committee, commented that there seems to be little discretionary funding and many unfunded mandates. Principal Rodman indicated that it costs about \$94,000 to send a child to the Cape Cod Collaborative in Osterville and that does not count other services a child receives. Each special needs child that is educated out of the district costs well over \$100,000. She felt it is better to create a program at Wellfleet and keep the students with their peers. Discussion ensued about educating a special needs child, staffing, and costs. She also indicated that they will be going from 10 full-time teachers to nine full time teachers without impacting the programming. The greatest increases were in Special Needs and the facilities maintenance was up over \$7,000. It was also noted that the contractual settlement for employees was included in the budget.

Jill Putnam thanked Principal Rodman for her creative thinking and problem-solving that brought the regular day budget to 1.41%. She also indicated that Special Needs is mandated and it is an extraordinary expense. Superintendent Conrad stated that educating a Special Needs child out of district could cost \$165,000 and Wellfleet's cost is conservative. He stated this was a remarkable effort to keep our kids in our school. Parents want to keep their children at their community school. Everyone is pleased with the progress of these students.

Reports and Information

Cape Cod Collaborative – Jill Putnam reported that there were 795 participants in the All Cape In-service, a subcommittee is working with Mass. Maritime planning the summer experience, an Executive Director Evaluation Subcommittee has been formed, the alternative High School is heading to Bourne, Bridgewater State is offering a program so people who have a bachelors degree can get Special Needs certification, and member representatives are being penalized if they miss two meetings but may be reinstated.

PTA – Betsy Pontius reported that the PTA board is getting familiar with things. The Oyster Festival raised \$600-\$700.

School Council – Principal Rodman indicated they are meeting and hoping to complete academic portion of School Improvement Plan.

Nauset Preschool – Enrollment in packet.

Negotiations Subcommittee – Mort Inger indicated that negotiations are going really well.

Policy Subcommittee – Betsy Pontius reported that the Subcommittee will be meeting again in January.

Transportation Subcommittee – Martha Gordon indicated they are meeting in January.

Substance Abuse Task Force – Martha Gordon reported that she was unable to go to the Substance Abuse Task Force meeting due to another meeting. She read, from the minutes, what transpired at the meeting that included: talk about the cuts in the Governor’s budget, Dr. Caretti will figuring out if we can apply for the \$15,000 grant and if it can be used to purchase curriculum, reviewed the Middle School student survey, received a copy of Mass. Youth Survey. This survey was given to Dr. Caretti and she will find out if they need to use a specific survey. She also mentioned that on January 3rd the District is offering a Substance Abuse Course, run by Gosnold at the Eddy Elementary School from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and members may attend. Members thanked Martha for spending her time with the School Committee and the Substance Abuse Task Force.

MASC Conference – Jill Putnam, delegate, reported that all the resolutions went the way the Wellfleet School Committee voted. This year many of the sessions were about social and emotional learning. She shared excerpts from a book, Seven Habits of Happy Kids, by Sean Covey. She also gave Principal Rodman and Superintendent Conrad a handout entitled, *Telling Your Story* and the most effective ways to reach different age levels and different generational people.

Chair Plaue reported that she was very impressed with the sessions especially those dealing with social and emotional learning.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted unanimously, to approve the minutes of November 1, 2016 as amended.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Jill Putnam, it was voted unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann M. Tefft

Included in packet: Administrative Reports, Expense Reports, Wellness Policy, Strategic Objectives, and minutes. FY18 budget books were distributed at the meeting.