

WELLFLEET SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

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, Mary Beth Rodman, Principal

CALL TO ORDER/AGENDA CHANGES – Chair Jan Plaue called the meeting to order at 4:30p.m.

CHAIR'S REPORT –

Chair Plaue let the Committee know that she will not be in attendance at the next meeting.

MEMBER'S SPEAK- Mort Inger thanked the Superintendent for the great presentation before Selectmen. The Superintendent indicated that the Region Board is moving forward with a \$1.3 million request for renovations to the High School and that it must get on all the towns warrants.

Betsy Pontius indicated that she cannot attend the Joint meeting.

CITIZENS SPEAKS – None

PRIORITY BUSINESS

Administrators' Reports

Principal Rodman's Report

Principal Rodman's report was included in the packet. She reported she was very pleased we the success of the Read Aloud Program where 18 guests came to read to students with 9 of the guests being from the Wellfleet Police Department. The staff enjoyed it and would like to make it an annual event.

Principal Rodman reported that the custodian discovered a broken water pipe that caused extensive damage in the Library. She is waiting to hear from the insurance company. The carpets might have to be replaced. The Superintendent indicated he will set up a meeting with Rise Engineering as this situation is not acceptable. Principal Rodman indicated that the Green Community Grant Fund installed high tech circulators and they have been a disaster. The Superintendent indicated this is no one's fault. He would like to meet with the Board of Selectmen and explain the situation and perhaps get some assistance. Principal Rodman indicated that \$15,000 has been spent from the operating budget to pay for the repairs. Principal Rodman thanked April and Paul for all their work on this, as well as the staff. Jill Putnam suggested getting legal Counsel through the town.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Assistant Superintendent Keith Gauley's report was included in the packet. There were no questions.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Conrad reported that he is working on budgets. Every town is dealing with the same issue of rising healthcare costs and fixed wages. He reported that he attended the National Superintendents' Conference. The sessions he attended included: Supporting a Steam K-12 program, Best Practices, Envision the Future with STEM, Fresh Ideas-U.S. and China, Personalizing and Creating an Incubator for Innovation, and Starting to Talk to Students about Career and College Readiness (inner city). He thanked the Committee for letting him attend the conference as it is good to see what is happening at the national level and get a good feel for trends. He reported that Keith Gauley will give a report on MCAS 2.0 to Union 54 members. He also indicated that the state wants to create a new base line and no levels. They are focusing on participation numbers other than the high schools. The Superintendent hopes all contracts will be wrapping up with negotiations.

FY17 Budget Review

Giovanna Venditti reviewed the expense report with the Committee noting a balance of \$17,703. She also explained line item #4088 and let the Committee know Dr. Caretti is covering \$20,000 from grants. Boiler repairs were \$14,000. Dr. Caretti's office is applying for extraordinary relief and \$10-20,000 could be returned. Ms. Venditti also indicated that the Committee may have money in the oil line item. So far this year only \$4,492 has been expended and there is still \$46,000 encumbered.

Appoint Single Member to Approve Bill Warrants

Ms. Venditti indicated that she has an iPad for Betsy Pontius with detailed instructions. She suggested Betsy read through the instructions and set up an appointment to meet with Accounts Payable personnel.

Public Hearing -School Choice

The Superintendent informed the Committee that he received a letter from a bus driver who drives the Wellfleet students and requested having her two children attend Wellfleet Elementary School under school choice. He indicated the Committee could choose to open school choice for particular seats. He also indicated that Wellfleet did not have to provide transportation. A discussion ensued about the pros and cons of school choice, the affordable housing project in Eastham, and accepting overflow students if Eastham could not accommodate them. Mr. Inger indicated he was interested in doing something collaboratively with Truro and Eastham.

The Superintendent indicated that Nauset has almost 300 students who come to the district as school choice students. He indicated that it is great to be an excellent, Level 1 school that is personalized for student learning and the Wellfleet community should be proud. He stated that School Choice works best when you get the right student and you have the space available. It doesn't cost the district anything and you gain additional revenue. You could pick up four students and have \$22,000.

The Magnet School concept was mentioned. The Superintendent indicated that Provincetown has an IB Program and that 24 students have left the Nauset district. The Superintendent is interested in working with Superintendent Mike Gradone on a program. He also stated that small classes can be problematic at some

point. Jill Putnam noted the developmental differences in High School and elementary school students. She also indicated that the former Superintendent, Mike Gradone, was very much against school choice. She mentioned what happened when Orleans opened seats for school choice.

MOTION:

On a motion by Jill Putnam, seconded by Betsy Pontius, it was voted not to participate in school choice for the 2017-2018 school year.

Chair Plaue reminded the Committee that Wellfleet has tremendous pressure when they lose the 30 students that will be in 5th grade next year. The enrollment number will decline into the 80's and they will still need the same amount of money to educate the children in town. The Superintendent indicated that Eastham is the same and that they will be able to handle students from the affordable housing build without the assistance from another school. Chair Plaue felt the Committee should think about the loss of 30 students in the near future.

Magnet School Concept

Superintendent Conrad showed materials dealing with the IB Program to the Committee and also indicated that he and Superintendent Gradone are talking about how to find joint programs. The Superintendent is planning on visiting an IB school and reported that the High School is going with the IB model in 2018. Chair Plaue indicated that she would like to visit an IB School with the Superintendent. The Superintendent is working with the Principals and at some point they will talk about the interest for their individual schools. The Superintendent is looking into after school and summer programs in science and math, as there is an interested community member who might like to fund that type of program. Orleans might look at some type of Spanish immersion program. In Brewster, the Superintendent indicated he has two teachers interested in an Arts Academy, project based and dedicated to art and music. He reminded the Committee that looking at alternative programs is as a result of parent surveys indicating they want more options for their children.

Jill Putnam inquired where this is coming from as she believes WES is a school that is strong in arts and strong in differentiated learning. She voiced her concern that the elementary schools will be competing with one another and was also concerned with transportation.

Capital Plan

Principal Rodman informed the town that they would be reclassifying the capital plan. In 2018, Wellfleet is asking for \$80,000. They will need the fuel tank cleaned at a cost of \$13,000.

Motion:

On a motion by Martha Gordon, seconded by Betsy Pontius, it was voted unanimously to restructure the Capital Improvement Plan so that \$15,000 is taken out of Item #3, Floor Covering, and the oil tanked is cleaned.

Reports and Information

Cape Cod Collaborative – Jill Putnam reported that the Collaborative discussed the rising cost of healthcare with an 8.5% - 11% increase. People seemed to favor Cape Cod Municipal Healthcare which has a high deductible. The Director of Wake Point is leaving and a consultant has been hired to work with staff for this transition. Jill Putnam will be on the committee to interview the new person. The Collaborative continues to look at transportation and is working with Monomoy, Dennis-Yarmouth and Bourne, as well as, Nauset. They are working on the Executive Director's yearly evaluation. On Saturday, April 29, there will be a Transition Fair for parents with special needs children. The Star Program began a family lunch in the winter that was very successful.

PTA – No report

School council – No report

Negotiations – Mort reported that they are working on language issues. The next meeting they hope to finalize negotiations with the teachers.

Policy – No report

Transportation – No report

Substance Abuse Task Force – The Committee met in February and finished the Middle School survey. Parents can opt out, no one had, and the deadline was extended. The Middle School students are taking the survey in all classes. The Subcommittee is reviewing a draft of the High School survey. Jessica Larsen is approaching the Collaborative with the idea of having them work on a recovery high school. The Mental Health Task Force did not meet. They will meet on March 30th.

Nauset Preschool - Enrollment in packet.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Betsy Pontius, it was voted unanimously, to approve the minutes of February 14, 2017, as amended.

Adjournment

On a motion by Betsy Pontius, seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann M. Tefft

Included in packet: Administrative Reports, Expense Reports, Preschool Enrollment, Minutes