

WELLFLEET SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 11, 2017

Present for the School Committee: Betsy Pontius Jill Putnam, Martha Gordon, and Jan Plaue

Absent for the Committee: Mort Inger

Present for the Administration: Thomas Conrad, Superintendent, Mary Beth Rodman, Principal

CALL TO ORDER/AGENDA CHANGES – Chair Jan Plaue called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. The Chair announced there would be a change in the order of Items, Item F will follow A.

Jill Putnam made a correction in the records as she had to leave before the end of the meeting and wanted to thank the PTA for a very well-planned and well-organized Spaghetti Supper.

CHAIR'S REPORT – No report.

MEMBERS' SPEAK – Martha Gordon just completed a flyer for Recovery 349 which will be held on May 10th at the Wellfleet Library. This is a group of people interested in starting a recovery high school in response to the substance abuse crisis.

Betsy Pontius indicated that she is not available to attend the May meeting.

Martha Gordon indicated that she is not available to attend the June meeting.

CITIZENS SPEAKS – None

PRIORITY BUSINESS

Request for Classroom Space – Wellfleet Montessori School

Beth Foerster, Director of the Wellfleet Montessori School, asked the committee for permission to continue to use classroom space at the Wellfleet Elementary School for the 2017-2018 school year. She also asked if it were possible to get a two-year agreement.

Principal Rodman indicated that Wellfleet has the space and has an excellent relationship with the Montessori School. It was the consensus of the committee that space should be requested on a yearly basis. Chair Plaue suggested if Ms. Foerster wishes to change the agreement, she should come before the committee in January.

Motion:

On a motion by Jill Putnam, seconded by Betsy Pontius, it was voted unanimously to grant permission for the Wellfleet Montessori School to continue using classroom space at Wellfleet Elementary School for the 2017-2018 school year.

Town Meeting Preparation

Members of the Committee, the Superintendent and Principal Rodman discussed talking points for town meeting that included:

- Superintendent Conrad and Principal Rodman will attend the meeting
- Special Needs piece needs to be explained
- Emphasize the regular day portion of the budget is below 2.5%
- State mandates, no matter what the needs are
- Wellfleet wants to keep their children in their own community and forgo a long bus ride to Bourne
- Significant that the Wellfleet operating budget historically has never been over 2.5% and are good stewards of town funds
- Wellfleet is a Level 1 school

It was suggested that parents go to the microphones and give testimony to Wellfleet Elementary School.

Principal Rodman reminded the Committee that the budget started out at 15% and one teacher has been reduced, 10 teachers to 9 teachers.

The Superintendent indicated that the Finance Committee is not voting favorably for the town's entire operating budget as they felt it has been higher for several years and they fear this is becoming a trend. Martha Gordon indicated that the Finance Committee is very concerned about people in town who can barely make ends meet.

Chair Plaue indicated that she will attend the pre-town meeting on April 18th. Betsy Pontius indicated she will talk to the PTA and ask them to share stories about their good experiences at WES. Jill Putnam stated this is a good time to communicate with the town and correct wrong perceptions. Superintendent Conrad suggested the committee tell the town that transportation is being reviewed and equipment is shared, showing the district is trying to help itself.

The cost of health insurance increasing 9-11% and retiree benefits were mentioned. Superintendent Conrad shared that the district and the town of Wellfleet have been working on another option for health insurance in a high deductible plan that will be less costly for the town and the employee.

Administrators' Reports

Principal Rodman's Report

Principal Rodman's report was included in the packet. She informed the committee that Maryanne Millette-Kelley has announced her retirement. Margie Wallace will be the Title I Math teacher and the Library Media Instructor. Principal Rodman also shared sad news of a car accident that took place in Wellfleet and injured an Educational Assistant and her fifth grade daughter from Wellfleet Elementary School. It was noted the outpouring from the community has been remarkable. Principal Rodman indicated she was not concerned about coverage for the educational assistant who is still experiencing trauma and a concussion.

Chair Plaue stated that the retirement will be a financial help to the Wellfleet budget. She questioned whether the budget should be amended and asked the committee for their opinions. The Superintendent

indicated that there is a placeholder for a new Grade 5 teacher at masters plus five. He suggested the Principal move quickly to replace the teacher. Principal Rodman commented that this will not be the only year there is a high budget. Does the committee wish to use the money so that the following year it is not so high or do you want to pre-pay preschool tuition? Betsy Pontius did not wish to amend the budget until they were sure of an amount for a new teacher.

Jill Putnam left the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Principal Rodman announced that Staff Appreciation Day is Tuesday, May 2nd. She reminded the Committee that Art's Night is April 13th from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. She also shared rehearsal times and indicated that it will be videotaped and placed on the website.

Chair Plaue inquired about the student surveys and Principal Rodman explained the process indicating it was not for administration to see but for the educator to use for self-assessment in the fall.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Assistant Superintendent Keith Gauley's report was included in the packet. Chair Plaue inquired about the new visitor registration software. Superintendent Conrad explained the new process which includes CORI checks and restraining orders as well as driver license identification.

Martha Gordon inquired if the curriculum committee will be looking at curriculum like *The Responsive Classroom* and *Calmer Choice*.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Conrad reported that he met with Bill Maine from RISE relative to the heating system at Wellfleet Elementary School. Mr. Maine thought the problem was due to the flow of electricity into the building. He collected data and suggested that when there are winds over 29 mph, there is a change in the flow of electricity. He is in discussions with Eversource. Bill Grozier, the Wellfleet Town electrician, is also involved as he indicated that this is a problem in the town of Wellfleet and not just a Wellfleet Elementary School issue. The Superintendent suggested that there be 4 opportunities to reignite the system and perhaps it should try to reignite every 10 minutes or every 30, 40, or 50 minutes.

Principal Rodman indicated that the generator at Wellfleet Elementary School operates manually. This presents a problem as help is needed to open the cover to get to the switch. It cannot be done by one person. Principal Rodman reminded the committee that Wellfleet Elementary School is a storm shelter. The Superintendent indicated that this is archaic and a plan must be put in place for the future.

The Superintendent reported that there are tentative agreements across the board relative to negotiations. He also indicated that Mark Mathison, Ann McConchie, Keith Gauley and himself spent 8 hours reading through the contracts. All the language in the contracts has been updated and read in a more common way. Mark Mathison is scheduling meetings after the vacation for groups to ratify their contracts.

The Superintendent informed the committee that the Region School Committee voted to move forward with the feasibility study project at the High School. They are asking the towns for the school district to borrow \$1.3 million for the study. He is working with Greg O'Brien to help with a one-page handout for town meetings. Chris Easley will be presenting for Wellfleet. Wellfleet's share of the cost is \$108,000. He also informed the committee that Cape Tech is looking to vote their project in the fall for \$140 million.

FY17 Budget Review

The Superintendent reminded the committee that Ms. Venditti was not in attendance due to preparation for her son's wedding. The balance in the budget is -\$2,801.12. The Superintendent indicated that Ms. Venditti will explain how we will get to zero. Principal Rodman reminded the Committee that the fuel oil encumbrance is \$42,000. The Committee reviewed the extraordinary maintenance detail dated 3/28/17. At the next meeting Administration will bring firm numbers from the insurance company.

Review Capital Budget

Principal Rodman indicated that the Capital Improvement budget is the same except for 2018 and distributed a new list with reclassified FY18 items voted by the school committee on March 14, 2017. Principal Rodman indicated that after meeting with Jim Nowack, it was suggested they submit a request to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and see if the town could receive almost 37% in reimbursement for these projects. This process usually takes about five years. On April 27th, Mr. Nowack, Ms. Venditti, Ms. Rodman and the Superintendent will meet to discuss this proposal. Chair Plaue suggested keeping two lists for capital and trade back and forth as things come up. She also suggested this be explained to the Finance Committee. The Superintendent indicated he will have a conversation with the Town Administrator and the boards at some point.

Superintendent's Evaluation

The Superintendent reviewed the timeline for the evaluation process. He asked if members wanted paper copies or wanted to complete the evaluation on line. Betsy Pontius and Martha Gordon indicated they would like to complete the process on line. This will be sent to them in the Nauset email.

Reports and Information

Cape Cod Collaborative – No report

PTA – No report

School Council – Martha Gordon reported the council is reviewing the School Improvement Plan. She reported that someone asked if WES could fill its preschool class before vouchers are given out. The consensus was that it may be discriminatory and that good advertising and parent comments about how much they value public education would be important. She also indicated that the theme of the parade is Animals and will take place on June 9th with a rain date of June 16th.

Preschool – Enrollment report included in the packet.

Policy Subcommittee – No report

Transportation – Martha Gordon indicated the subcommittee is meeting in June.

Substance Abuse Task Force – Martha Gordon reported that the committee met and reviewed the findings of the Middle School survey. The findings made it clear that there is a high degree of anxiety and stress regarding family, friendships and body image. There were not high instances of drug use. Dr. Ann Caretti is analyzing the data. The committee is almost done with the High School survey and it will be out soon. Parents will be notified and they can opt their student out if they so choose.

The Mental Health Task Force also met and talked about the same issues as the Substance Abuse Task Force. Members included someone from Senator Julian Cyr's office (via conference call), Dottie Smith from Representative Sarah Peake's office, and Scottie Finnegan from NAMI. They talked about the level of risk for kids, what services they need and what services are presently in place. Martha Gordon indicated that the committee determined that parents of kids with mental health issues feel isolated and kids with parents having mental health issues feel isolated. They talked about using the school building as a community center. Gosnold was partnering with the school but cannot get anyone until May. The Nauset High School staff is still waiting for help from Gosnold. She also indicated that NAMI meets once a week at Preservation Hall in Wellfleet.

Discussion took place about cell phone use, pros and cons.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Betsy Pontius, seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted unanimously, to approve the minutes of March 14, 2017, as amended.

Adjournment

On a motion by Betsy Pontius, seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann M. Tefft

Included in packet: Administrative Reports, Expense Reports, Preschool Enrollment, Minutes. Handout: Capital Improvement Plan revised