

Wellfleet School Committee  
Wellfleet Elementary School Conference Room  
March 12, 2019

Present for the Committee: Mort Inger, Betsy Pontius, Jill Putnam and Martha Gordon

Present for the Administration: Thomas Conrad, Ann Caretti, Joanna Stevens and Mary Beth Rodman

**Call to Order**

Vice Chair Betsy Pontius called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

**Agenda Change**

None

**Chair's Report**

None

**Members Speak** – Jill Putnam thanked Betsy Pontius and Martha Gordon for putting together the community forum. She indicated they did a good job facilitating.

**Citizens Speak** – None

**Priority Business**

**Administrators' Reports**

**Principal's Report**

Principal Rodman's report was included in the packet. She informed the committee that after school enrichment is offering 2 courses this session. They used to offer 4-5 courses but feel perhaps the after school program has impacted the enrichment program. She informed the committee that she mailed a letter and survey to parents who choice out of Wellfleet Elementary School. She indicated eleven families received the letter. The survey asks the reason why they leave WES.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Conrad reported that he followed up with Dan Hoort, Town Administrator, regarding financing for Special Needs program. The Superintendent indicated that Dan Hoort is aware of the situation and is a great help to the school. He reported that he and Ms. Venditti are meeting with Boards and Finance Committees to present the budgets. He will be meeting with the Wellfleet Board of Selectmen on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

**FY19 Budget Review**

Giovanna Venditti reviewed the expenditure report noting a balance of \$35,841.84. She reviewed line items with significant movement.

**School Choice**

Superintendent Conrad explained school choice to members indicating that the committee votes each year to participate or not to participate. The decision must be made by May 1<sup>st</sup>. He indicated that the Middle School and High School participate in school choice each year. The elementary schools vary and open one or two seats occasionally. He also indicated that Truro and Provincetown participate in school choice. He shared data that indicated 17 Wellfleet students leave Wellfleet or Nauset to go to a school choice school.

(11 elementary age students) Mort Inger stated they are not leaving Wellfleet, they are going to another school for something WES does not offer.

Superintendent Conrad indicated that he and Principal Rodman looked at school choice, class sizes, and programs. Principal Rodman informed the committee that the incoming Kindergarten may be 19 students, with 17 confirmed. She indicated she would consider adding 2-3 students in Grade 1. Dr. Ann Caretti indicated that there are limitations to special needs school choice students and the school is not required to create a program for a child that comes into the school. She also informed the committee there is a school choice reimbursement formula and that the school would not get reimbursed 100% if a child needs 1-1 assistance. They do not reimburse for benefits for the educational assistant. Dr. Caretti indicated that the open seat is according to the general education program and not what you have in a substantially separate classroom. Members expressed their thoughts on school choice and the consensus was to limit it for this year to 2-3 students in Grade 1.

The Superintendent explained the process if the school committee voted to open seats. He also indicated that the school would receive a little more than \$5,000 per student. He also stated that WES will not be taking on any additional costs and transportation is the responsibility of the parent.

**Motion:**

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Jill Putnam, it was voted 4 yeas to adopt school choice with the limit of 2 students for First Grade.

### **Preschool Update**

Joanna Stevens spoke to the committee about Nancy O'Connell's integrated preschool classroom moving to Eastham Elementary School. Ms. Stevens indicated that she talked to parents about the potential move. Most families were supportive of the move and a couple people were undecided. Dr. Caretti indicated that Ms. O'Connell would like this opportunity. The Superintendent reminded the committee that this is a Region program. Dr. Caretti indicated the cost of transportation will increase by 3% and won't be an Eastham expense. Community friends provide their own transportation.

Principal Rodman suggested, if the move takes place, they use the vacated space for a community space and utilize it more. She thought the Recreation Department could have an office at WES.

### **Public Forum Update**

Martha Gordon reported that the forum went well even though the weather did not cooperate. She indicated it was a pleasure to work with Betsy Pontius and thanked Jill Putnam for her help on the day of the event. Nineteen people participated. (11 parents, 5 committee members, 1 Librarian, 1 Reporter, 1 WES Teacher) Martha Gordon reviewed the format and the questions asked at each table. Vouchers for preschool was discussed and expanding it to 3 year olds, reasons families leave WES, more collaboration with the community, recreation offerings, looking at the Truro system, IB Program, and Foreign Language, were some of the topics of discussion. Mort Inger indicated there was no criticism of WES. Provincetown and Truro have other things that parents want. It was mentioned that a lot of stakeholders could not make the meeting due to the weather. The committee suggested gathering more feedback on the five questions and perhaps put something at the Senior Center and Library for people to comment and return to WES. Emailing was also mentioned and what email address to use for commenting. Vice Chair Betsy Pontius suggested taking some of these ideas and putting them into action. Principal Rodman added that she does not think the community realizes what WES offers. She will provide a document about the accomplishments and things that encapsulate the uniqueness of WES. She will send it to Martha Gordon and Betsy Pontius to give people more information about WES and get the word out. This

could also be given to the reporter. The Superintendent thought a TV program might be a way to talk about WES. Vice Chair Pontius indicated that she and Martha Gordon will have a follow up meeting to decide on ideas.

### **Reports and Information**

**Cape Cod Collaborative** – Jill Putnam reported that the Collaborative is looking for an Operations Manager to take care of transportation. Schools continue to inquire about transportation and some have contracted with the Collaborative for bus transportation. She reported that Collaborative staff received a 2% increase and that there was a bump in rates for Therapists. Teachers received a grant from the Cape Cod Five for a Sea Mural. They are planning for the Leadership Academy at Mass. Maritime. 254 students have applied to take advantage of the program but there are only 208 openings. She reported that DY students have an exchange program with China but students are having some challenges coming here.

**Preschool Enrollment** in packet

**PTA** – no meeting (April 5<sup>th</sup>, Spaghetti Supper)

**Policy Subcommittee** – No report, meeting 3-28

**Substance Abuse Subcommittee** - Martha Gordon reported that the committee revised questions for the next survey that included question about vaping. They thought about adding questions for kids affected by mental health or substance abuse in their family.

**Strategic Plan Committee** – Martha Gordon reported that they are meeting twice a month and that it is an incredible experience. Principal Minkoff is the Chair of the Committee. Members were assigned a topic that was identified and then developed a written response to share at the meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes –**

On a motion by Mort Inger seconded by Jill Putnam, it was voted 4 yeas to approve the minutes of February 12, 2019 as amended.

### **Adjournment**

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:19 p.m.

Submitted by  
Ann M. Tefft

Included in the Packet: Principal's Report, Expenditure Report, and Minutes. Distributed at the meeting, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, WES Joins the Conversation outline from M. Gordon and Betsy Pontius.