

Wellfleet School Committee  
Wellfleet Town Hall Virtual Meeting  
May 12, 2020

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

Present for the Administration: Superintendent Tom Conrad, Giovanna Venditti, Director of Finances and Principal Mary Beth Rodman

**Call to Order** – Chair Pontius called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

**Agenda Changes** - None

**Chair’s Report** – Chair Pontius applauded Principal Rodman and Nauset for the quick response to the transition to remote learning for staff students and the general public. She felt communication from the Superintendent has been steady and informative. She thanked the Superintendent for keeping the Committee well-informed.

**Member’s Report** – Martha Gordon wanted to know what the school committee could be doing to help the Superintendent and staff. She also inquired about the contract for the buses parking at WES in the summer. She shared her thoughts on re-thinking the contract in light of the virus.

Jill Putnam applauded Superintendent Conrad, Principal Rodman, and staff for the stellar job under unprecedented circumstance and applauded the ways the District is responding.

**Citizens Speak** - None

**Priority Business –  
Administrators’ Reports**

**Principal’s Report**

Principal Rodman reported that remote learning and the new guidelines for Nauset have been distributed to staff. Every classroom teacher is meeting their students at least three times per week. Most of the teachers are seeing the kids every single day. Specialists are seeing kids two times a week. They will have a spring concert with Grade 4 and Grade 5 students. She also indicated that they have loaned 20 iPads to families who did not have them. Eighteen students were not responding to emails and phone calls. She encouraged the staff to keep track of attendance. Some families have personal reasons for not connecting and others have connectivity issues, which have been fixed. She recognized, Claudia Crosen, School Nurse, for visiting a student and the family daily. She brought them a laptop and helped get internet access. She continues to visit them weekly for a check-in. She reported the part time custodians have returned to work. A Grade 5 celebration is being planned. She reported the incoming Kindergarten enrollment figure is 14 and she has no school choice applications to date. They will be mailing the student handbook and a Tools of the Mind brochure to incoming Kindergarten families. As far as remote learning, she indicated that if a teacher is concerned about a student, a call is made to check-in with the family. She estimated that 85%-87% of the students are engaged in remote learning.

**Superintendent’s Report**

Superintendent Conrad recognized Sue Murray and the cafeteria staff for the phenomenal job they are doing. They are serving around 6,000 meals per week and are involved with the Councils on Aging in three towns to prepare meals for the homebound. The other piece they are tuned into is the social, emotional piece for students and their families. The elementary Principals and Patti Grenier met with the Superintendent for about 25 hours during vacation to prepare a guide for staff that coincides with the Commissioner’s directive. The District is fully involved in trying to move forward with the new learning

and focusing on Math and ELA standards. He indicated that he has weekly virtual meetings with the Commissioner of Education, his Association of Superintendents, Cape wide Superintendents and the NEA. He spends hours on the computer screen weekly which is very different. He reported that things change rapidly.

He also reported that the interviewing team has worked diligently to find a replacement for Dr. Ann Caretti. HR Coordinator, Carol Forgione headed up this effort with members of the staff and Administrators. Mary Buchanon from Cohasset has been chosen as Director of Student Needs and comes with an extensive background. Dr. Caretti will be working on making sure that we will be positioned to begin school. He shared that he is concerned about the gaps students may have from this period of time and is hoping to establish a partnership with the Recreation Program and will provide tutoring at various grade levels.

He is trying to understand how the District will go back to school in the fall. He has had no direction yet from the Governor or the Commissioner of Education. He is forming a task force and has invited parents to volunteer to be on the committee. They need to look at facilities and the guidelines that the state is recommending. He reported that negotiations committee is meeting to review plans for the coming contract. They are looking at a number of issues with the NEA such as spring sports, transportation and stipends. He reported the graduation plans for seniors at Nauset High School that will be held in late July in the stadium at Nauset High School. A senior celebration is being planned at the Wellfleet Drive-in.

He indicated that teacher evaluations will be rolled into the next year. The Superintendent's evaluation will have two new goals that pertain to the handling of the closure due to the pandemic and remote learning. School Improvement Plans will roll over into the next year. The Strategic Plan is complete and the District will move forward with those initiatives. He recognized Principal Rodman for keeping him posted on students, visiting homes, providing technology and doing such a great job. He will wait for word from the Governor on the Recreation Programs.

### **Bus Parking at WES in the Summer**

Chair Betsy Pontius indicated that she emailed Suzanne and did not hear back. She indicated that the contract has not been signed. Mort Inger stated that at the Selectmen's meeting it was clear that they don't want day trippers at the beaches this summer. He stated he does not like the idea of the buses coming to Wellfleet and parking at the school. Martha Gordon stated Suzanne had to talk to Town Counsel and did not think we could get out of the contract. Courtney, Administrative Assistant to the Town Administrator, indicated she was confused about the buses. She said the contract was on hold and also indicated that day parking at White Crest is closed. She is trying to communicate with the bus companies and has not heard anything else. She stated the Selectmen will be voting to move the summer season start up on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Stickers will be available until June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Pontius inquired if the school committee should release a statement indicating, in lieu of no signed contract, they are not interested in having buses parking at WES this summer. Courtney suggested sending this to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator, Dan Hoort. Jan Plaeue asked if there was a way for them to discourage the buses from coming. The School Committee was trying to help the town out. She did not like the idea of them coming but feels there is a bigger issue. If the buses still come, there is the problem that exists for the town as to where they will park them. Jill Putnam agreed the school committee should make a statement and get Town Counsel's opinion for sound advice. The situation has changed with the buses and it is not a good idea right now. She suggested the committee would like to roll this over until next summer and let them know concerns about the health of the community. The

Committee wants to support the town but right now this is not in the best interest of the town. Mort Inger suggested the committee write a letter indicating they do not want the parking to happen. Martha Gordon agreed indicating in the beginning of March it was a totally different picture but now safety of the community is what is important. Chair Pontius indicated she would craft a letter. She will continue to work with Suzanne to support the health and safety needs of the community at this time. She will send the letter to the Board of Selectmen, copy the school committee members and Suzanne.

### **FY20 Budget**

Giovanna Venditti indicated the balance was \$42,621. She indicated that she unencumbered money in the substitute and utility lines. Wellfleet did not qualify for extraordinary relief. She indicated there are Circuit Breaker funds available to spend in FY20. She highlighted items with a \$1,000 differential. She also indicated that oil is \$1.78 per gallon next year.

Jan Plaeue asked how next year's budget is being funded without a town meeting. Courtney indicated that the Governor indicated after June 30<sup>th</sup> you can use 1/12 of your prior year's budget each month.

### **Playground Update**

Principal Rodman indicated that due to school closure, there was no meeting. They collected only 29 surveys. They have suspended this effort at this point.

### **School Committee Vacancy**

Martha Gordon indicated there was no one on the ballot for Mort Inger's seat. Members brainstormed what to do about that situation.

### **Reports and Information**

**Cape Cod Collaborative** - Jill Putnam reported that she attended a Zoom meeting on April 8<sup>th</sup>. They had an Executive Session to discuss contracts for non-union personnel. They also discussed distance learning and its challenges. Way Point relocation is on hold. The Executive Director's evaluation is being discussed. The ASLP Program at Mass. Maritime will not be held and they will investigate some other things that might happen over the summer for the students who were selected to attend the ASLP Program. There will be an adjustment for bus transportation forthcoming.

**PTA** - no report

### **Strategic Plan**

Martha Gordon reported that the Strategic Plan draft is ready. The Committee went back and forth on adding something in the plan about distance learning. They felt the District should be ready in the event this happens again. They thought about adding something as an appendix. The Committee decided to wait and see what the Superintendent gives for an assessment, use that information, survey staff members, administrators and students. Revisit the plan every year and make changes if needed. The Committee drafted a letter to the Superintendent to that affect.

**Substance Abuse/Mental Health Task Force - no report**

**Policy Subcommittee** - no report

**Wellness Committee** -no report

**Future Agenda Items -**

Martha Gordon - communication

Principal Rodman - budget plan for remaining funds in FY20

Chair Pontius - summer meetings

Martha Gordon thanked the Superintendent, Principal Rodman and the entire staff for what they are doing.

**Approval of Minutes -**

On a motion by Mort Inger seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted 5 yeas to approve the minutes of March 10, 2020 as amended.

**Adjournment**

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Jan Plaue, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Submitted by

Ann M. Tefft

Included in the packet: FY20 financials and minutes.