

# MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – January 9, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, January 9, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. at Wayland High School Lecture Hall, South Building 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.

*Present:*

Chris Ryan, Chair  
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair (absent)  
Jeanne Downs  
Erin Gibbons  
Jessica Polizzotti

*Also present:*

Dr. Omar Easy  
Superintendent

Parry Graham  
Assistant Superintendent

Tom Lafleur  
Director of Finance & Operations

Barbara Cataldo  
Interim Director of Special Education

Patricia Keefe  
Director of Wayland School Community Programs

*Finance Committee*

Pam Roman, Co-Chair  
Kelly Lapin, Vice Chair  
Brian O’Herlihy

Brian Keveny, Director of Finance for the Town of Wayland

**1. Welcome & Call to Order:**

Chair Chris Ryan convened the regular session at 6:10 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM. Jess Polizzotti acknowledged that the January 4 meeting was a difficult one. The School Committee heard them, they are listening, and are working behind the scenes to address some of the questions posed at that meeting. Jeanne Downs agreed.

**2. Public Comment:**

Maryann Borkowski, 251 Lakeshore Drive, addressed the racist graffiti that represented a painful sign of hate, causing fear among people of color and especially to the Superintendent and his family. She commented that School Committee leadership is needed now, and she would like to see more concrete updates at each meeting, as accountability and transparency is also needed. These acts are damaging to the Town and the time to act is now. Ms. Borkowski referred to the Middle School racial incidents and asked about the status of those incidents, and if the School Committee has followed their own Anti-racism Resolution in the past two years, such as DEI training for teachers, staff, and School Committee members. Lastly, she asked that ZOOM meetings be reinstated for Boston families.

Sarah Peterson and Erica Borgy came before the School Committee to ask for its support and budget consideration this year and in perpetuity regarding AAC (Augmentative & Alternative Communication) devices, as this is a continuing budget concern. They commented that the district is legally obligated to provide AAC training not only for staff, but for parents who need these devices for their children. This will provide equity and access for all students, including their children who do not have communication skills. Dr. Easy and his administration have been forthcoming and moving them in a positive direction. They provided the School Committee with a letter for its review prior to this meeting. They noted their involvement around DEIC initiatives.

Alexia Obar, 18 Dean Road, thanked the School Committee for the way in which they conducted the meeting on January 4, and was very surprised that no teachers were in attendance given the topic. She was not pleased to hear that teachers

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are not required to participate in equity seminars/workshops. Ms. Obar asked the School Committee to conduct an investigation about the bullying going on in the schools since last year and based on statements made by the WTA and the parents and students.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Nora Rothschild, Rice Spring Lane. She wrote in strong support of the proposed action items brought forth at the January 4 meeting: robust affinity spaces, an annual requirement of PD for all Wayland school employees on implicit bias and anti-racism, and a more socially-diverse K-12 curriculum, as everyone, including her two children will benefit. Ms. Rothschild suggested a newly designated WPS Diversity, Equity, and Belonging group that would meet regularly and would collaborate with the Human Rights, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Maryann Wohlfarth, 29 Woodland Road. She expressed her surprise when the School Committee was accused by two employees and one former employee of being the catalyst for the racist graffiti on December 21 and that they were asked to call off the investigation among other complaints. Ms. Wohlfarth thanked the School Committee for not relinquishing. She also called for transparency around legal fees for such matters.

### 3. **Special Matter with the Finance Committee:**

#### 3.1 *Discussion and Q & A regarding FY24 Budget, including Special Education, Special Revenue Revolving Accounts, Special Education Stabilization Account:*

Tom Lafleur described the school department's zero-based budget process leading up to the FY24 recommended budget, adding that out-of-district tuitions are actual students; he explained. The out-of-district tuition is controlled by the Operational Services Division (OSD) of Massachusetts and this year's state-wide increase is 14 percent, and per Massachusetts General Law these services are mandatory.

Dr. Easy presented an overview of the Special Education budget, including a breakdown of the out-of-district costs. The FY23 budget was \$3,618,949 and the projected FY24 budget is \$5,361,886. In addition, Dr. Easy presented The Children's Way (TCW) revolving account budget which is made up of fees, as well as the staffing model past and present. TCW is the sixth school in Wayland as of this year. The operating budget has always funded occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech services for the TCW.

Members of the Finance Committee posed questions to the administrators regarding the SPED budget in general, the 14% increase for out-of-district placement in terms of dollar value, the Circuit Breaker, and anticipated and unanticipated costs. A request was made for the gross budget to understand the funding sources, given that the Circuit Breaker is always a year in arrears. Dr. Cataldo described many situations, including the pandemic that impacted the SPED budget. The goal is to keep students in-district, but if that is not possible, the Collaboratives are considered first. She described the language-based program established at Claypit Hill School which services ten students, proving that programs need to be built internally, thus, eliminating out-of-district placements. A discussion followed.

Dr. Cataldo described the language-based program, its capacity and the potential for more staff. Currently, 33 students attend schools out of the district because services are not available in the Wayland schools. Brian O'Herlihy requested actuals vs. the budget for FY21, FY22, and FY23 through November 2022, as he asked how the \$900,000 unanticipated costs are being funded. Tom responded. Brian Keveny will provide the actuals vs. the budget.

Dr. Easy commented that the Tri-County Superintendents will meet soon to discuss how to access additional state funding for their districts. A discussion ensued about the possibility of attaining the Special Education Stabilization Fund to cover the costs of unanticipated costs.

The Finance Committee left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

*Erin Gibbons left the meeting at 7:17 p.m.; returned at 7:19 p.m.*

#### **Special Revenue Revolving Accounts:**

*Enrichment Programs:* These programs are staffed with outside vendors who provide activities after school. These programs stopped in FY21 due to COVID, as the remote programs were not ideal. One possibility, beginning in February through the spring, is one one-hour Spanish class at each of the elementary schools per week. The budget allows for 15 children this half year, 5 at each school, and could be the same next year in the fall and spring. Vendors give back 20% of their revenue for building use and administration. Space, however, is a concern.

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*Tutoring Program:* Tutoring is an extension of the school year or programming. At the beginning of FY23 (July 2022), summer strings (one week), wrap around childcare for the math and literacy programs (two weeks), and Spanish Immersion (two weeks) were offered. Tutors sometimes give back 10% to the program. In terms of the BASE program this year, private music lessons are offered to students in Grades 2 to 12, Little Local Vocals is offered in Grades 1 to 5, and Wayland Junior Broadway is offered to fourth graders who are transported to the high school for rehearsals. Ms. Keefe noted that if the private music lessons revenue can support a wage increase, she would like to give the teachers the same COLA's in their hourly wages that are approved for the in-school programs. In addition, it is likely that the fee for Wayland Junior Broadway will increase by \$5.00.

*Pegasus:* The School Committee reviewed the Pegasus budget, narrative, and a proposed rate sheet. This program has run for 30 years and in partnership with special education for fully inclusive summer programming. Ms. Keefe noted the summer schedule, adding that Wednesdays will expand next summer to provide field trips for K-5 students. She explained the tuition and programming structure, noting that since Wednesdays will now run from 9 to 3 p.m. rather than 9 to 1 p.m., she will increase the morning tuition by \$5.00/day to accommodate the costs of field trips and transportation. Also, staff wages will increase depending on the negotiated COLA's and the registration fee will increase to \$75.00 per family for those programs that charge a registration.

*BASE Program:* The BASE program absorbed the after-school program in August 2022 for The Children's Way when it became a DESE program. The fee structure was already established at that time and it stayed as such. There are 13 children in the program, and there is a wait list. Moving forward, the TCW fee structure has been adjusted to reflect the BASE fee structure; Ms. Keefe explained. The program's expenses vs. revenue is in deficit, and she would like to raise the tuition 5% to cover the cost of benefits. The budget moving forward, enrollment and staffing were discussed, adding that enrollment can be expanded by about 19 students with the current staff.

Finally, Ms. Keefe made a request to change the BASE (Before and After School Extension) acronym to the "Best After School Experience."

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the fee increases for BASE and Pegasus and the increase to tutoring teachers' wages as proposed.

### *Building Use and High School Parking:*

A discussion ensued to carry the same budget, as there are no changes, for building use and high school parking. Dr. Easy reported that he and Tom Lafleur spoke to the high school administration about the parking issues brought forth by the School Committee student representative Madeline O'Leary at one of its meetings. The parking fees will be revisited in FY24.

### *Special Education Stabilization Fund:*

A discussion ensued about how to move forward regarding this fund. This discussion will continue at the January 11 meeting.

## 4. **Administrative Matters:**

- 4.1 *Continued Discussion of Re-visiting a Schedule of Administrator-Teacher-Facilitator Meetings:*  
This agenda item was passed over.
- 4.2 *Discussion and Possible Vote of FY23 Superintendent Goals:*  
This agenda item was passed over.

## 5. **Financial Matters:**

- 5.1 *Discussion and Possible Approval of Three WHS Student Activity Accounts:*  
The WHS principal, Dr. Allyson Mizoguchi, requested the creation of three new student activity accounts: Best Buddies (Wayland Chapter), Wayland Rocketry Team, and a Medical Club.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the creation of three new WHS student activity accounts, Best Buddies, Wayland Rocketry Team, and Medical Club, as proposed.

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5.2 Discussion and Possible Approval of a METCO Revolving Fund:

METCO Director La Toya Rivers would like to establish a METCO program revolving fund for events held across the district specific to METCO and will be funded by fundraising efforts.

Upon a motion duly made by Erin Gibbons, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the creation of a revolving fund for the Wayland METCO Program as requested.

6. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

None.

7. Executive Session:

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to enter Executive Session at 8:03 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wayland Food Service Workers, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u>         | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Chris Ryan, Chair        | X          |           |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | absent     |           |
| Jeanne Downs             | X          |           |
| Erin Gibbons             | X          |           |
| Jess Polizzotti          | X          |           |

The School Committee will be joined by Dr. Omar Easy, Superintendent, Parry Graham, Assistant Superintendent, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session and will not reconvene in open session.

8. Adjournment:

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 9:09 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u>         | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Chris Ryan, Chair        | X          |           |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | absent     |           |
| Jeanne Downs             | X          |           |
| Erin Gibbons             | X          |           |
| Jess Polizzotti          | X          |           |

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Omar Easy, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

**Observers:**

Mary Ann Borkowski, 251 Lake Shore Drive  
Erin Mueller, 3 Pine Ridge Road  
Carole Plumb, Bald Rock Road  
Ann Landry, 85 Old Connecticut Path

**Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda
2. WHS New Student Activity Accounts
3. METCO New Revolving Fund Request
4. Executive Session Motion