



# Weymouth

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## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Weymouth School Committee

#### BUDGET SUB COMMITTEE

111 Middle St

FEBRUARY 4, 2020

Meeting Minutes

(approved 2/27/20)

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**Members In Attendance:** John Sullivan (Chair), Lisa Belmarsh, Carrie Palazzo, Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw,

**Members Absent:** Kathy Curran, Tracey Nardone

**Also Present:** Superintendent Jennifer Curtis-Whipple, Assistant Superintendent Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent Robert Wargo, Former Assistant Superintendent, Mary Ann Bryan, Assistant Director of Curriculum Melanie Curtin, Interim AD Mia Muzio, Principal MauraPerez

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**The Meeting Came to Order At 6:07pm.**

#### **Review of Budget Proposals for FY21**

##### **-Curriculum**

Assistant Superintendent Smith gave an overview of the proposal. Total appropriation is \$465,900 on the first page and on page 2 and 3 are the proposed requests. The amount remains level, however there are some shifts. Dr. Curtis-Whipple gave a rundown of the lines, including explaining that tuition we pay goes to Independence Academy (for students struggling with addiction) and home hospital tutoring. Other lines cover attendance letters and supplies, AP books, upgraded curriculum materials, and testing materials. Staffing was also discussed. Assistant Superintendent Smith turned the floor over to Melanie Curtin. Ms. Curtin highlighted the increase in enrollment among English Language Learners (ELL), staffing, DESE compliance and new requirements due to the implementation of the 'LOOK' Act. Testing, and standards have changed for 2020. From

August 2018 to current there are 146 new ELLs. Ms. Curtin shared that she would like to see an increase in oversight so as not to fall behind the changing standards.

Community Member Gus Perez inquired what grade levels the new students were and what was the most common first language. Ms. Curtin reported that the students are distributed equally at all three levels: middle school, high school, and the 4 primary ELL schools and that Brazilian Portuguese is the most common first language.

Mary Ann Bryan reiterated that changes in testing are ongoing.

#### -Athletics

Assistant Superintendent Smith gave an overview of the operating expenses advising that there are two components. One is operating expenses of \$5K for supplies, and the other is \$550K, consisting of \$200K for professional and clerical support and the trainer, and \$350K for coaches' stipends. Separate from the operating budget is the revolving budget, the source of which is user and gate fees. User fees represent approximately \$250k, while \$50K comes from gate fees. Mr. Smith stated he thought it would be a good idea to think about extending the expense line of \$5K to cover some more department expenses.

Community Member Perez inquired if this was the extent of the athletics presentation; that in previous years the presentations went into significant detail.

Superintendent Curtis-Whipple stated since her time at central office the athletic office has presented something different each year and that in an effort to streamline, administration was trying to have all departments do the same thing. One reason last year's presentation was extensive was because there was a new waiver program.

Assistant Superintendent Smith reiterated that all FY21 proposed cost center budgets have been presented in the same manner.

Dr. Sullivan requested the athletic revolving budget be covered at a later date. Ms. Belarsh suggested that the community member can submit questions, operational and revolving to the Budget Sub Chair and Superintendent. Dr. Sullivan stated that when the date is set for the revolving athletics budget the community member will be notified.

Another community member stated that in the past the athletics budget has been a huge problem, that it has since improved, and that she wanted to ensure that there wasn't regression anywhere in the budget.

Community Member Gus Perez inquired as to what was the level service budget for athletics. Assistant Superintendent Smith responded that it is roughly \$350K in stipends, from the payroll budget at the middle school and high school levels. When the level service budget is distributed in 2 weeks it will show a rise in stipends to comply with the WEA Unit A contract. Last year's total was \$552k (This was for 350 stipends, including the Athletic Director, Department Secretary and Athletic Trainer).

Ms. Belmarsh shared that with new people in place, new processes and new focuses and priorities change and therefore so does that conversation.

Ms. Muzio advocated for the addition of assistant rugby coaches due to high participation. She said one assistant coach would be needed for boys and one for girls, in order to keep student to coach ratios low and to maximize effectiveness and safety. Dr. Sherlock Shangraw asked if the position of Assistant Rugby Coach appeared in the Unit A contract. Administration said they thought it did not, but the WEA could be approached about adding it.

Mr. Smith repeated the revolving budget is solvent. Ms. Muzio shared that there are about 500 student athletes each season and that for a school the size of Weymouth, student athletes should number about 750 a season.

Community member Perez shared that he didn't feel that student athletes should have to pay a gate fee to attend. Ms. Belmarsh agreed.

#### **JECC-Review Pre-K Tuition Rates**

Principal Perez stated that there has not been an increase in fees since 2017, and is recommending a 3-4% increase across the board for all programs. At the last meeting, members had inquired as to whether the reporting requirements for the voucher program would need to factor into any discussion of a rise in tuition. Principal Perez reported that there were currently 8 students using vouchers and that number would drop to 4 in the next year. It is possible that with changes in the voucher program, parents may elect to use their vouchers for WeyCare, so vouchers are not likely to be much of an issue at Johnson.

Superintendent Curtis Whipple shared that a 3% increase would be fair to accommodate the expense of the program and to provide for staffing and specialists. Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that the intent was for this rise to last until the next review cycle in three years, but the committee may need to evaluate fees within the 3 year fee cycle if grants start to run out.

Registrations for JECC started 2/4/20 and Principal Perez stated that families were alerted that tuition may increase.

Ms. Belmarsh added she felt that it's fair to increase across the board and that it is nice to compare our tuition to the local market but that is not driving the increase.

**Ms. Belmarsh made a motion** to approve the increase in the JECC Pre K tuition rates at an overall increase of 3%. Seconded by Mrs. Sherlock-Shangraw. Passed unanimously.

Principal Perez left at 6:52pm.  
Dr. Curtis-Whipple left at 6:52 and returned at 6:53pm.

### **Gate Fee Update**

Assistant Superintendent Smith gave an overview of the gate fees received this fall and winter and shared that the target for fees including those we will receive in the spring is \$45-\$50K. There is a new secretary working in the athletic department with the interim Athletic Director.

Dr. Sullivan inquired if gate fees are earmarked for a particular line and Mr. Smith informed that they are for the general, revolving budget.

Ms. Sherlock-Shangraw inquired which sports have a gate fee. Ms. Muzio advised that gate fees are typically from night games and that she would love to increase the number of night games. The obstacle to this is often scheduling on the league level.

Superintendent Whipple shared that it might be helpful to look at other towns to see which sports/games charge gate fees so that we can make gate fees more equitable.

Community Member Perez communicated that gate fees are usually driven by the win-loss record of particular teams and by how active booster groups are. Another community member inquired if any games were canceled due to mosquitos and Ms. Muzio confirmed no games were cancelled.

Ms. Muzio will return in the spring to present ideas about restructuring gate fees that might include a season pass program, youth sports nights, honoring clubs at halftime, etc. Paying gate fees by paypal or venmo was also discussed. Paypal is currently being used to pay for user fees. Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that maybe a pilot program could be set up down the line for Paypal or something similar.

Ms. Palazzo suggested reaching out to parent councils to help with gaining attendance and 'school nights' for games.

Gate fees are \$5 for guests aged 8 and above. There is no charge for day games. Ms. Belmarsh stated she wished there was a way to eliminate gate fees. Dr. Sullivan shared that season passes would help with predictable income. Community member Perez clarified his hope that transparency is still the ongoing premise.

The Superintendent thanked Ms. Muzio for the outstanding job she is doing and for thinking outside the box.

Ms. Belmarsh requested another meeting before the budget has to be sent for publication. After discussion of the budget timeline a meeting was set for Monday, February 10 at 5:30pm. The agenda will be level service budget, compliance, and the needs list.

**The Meeting Adjourned at 7:19pm** on the motion of Ms. Belmarsh, seconded by Ms. Sherlock-Shangraw. Passed unanimously.

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**Documents Attached to These Minutes:**

- Budget Proposals for Curriculum, Athletics
- JECC-Review Pre-K Tuition Rates, Comparison
- Gate Fee Update

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John P. Sullivan", is written over a horizontal line.

John Sullivan