



Weymouth

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Weymouth School Committee

[ZOOM Meeting](#)

June 18, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

(approved 7/23/20)

Members In Attendance: Lisa Belmarsh, Chair; Tracey Nardone, Vice-Chair; John Sullivan, Secretary; Kathy Curran; Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw; Carrie Palazzo,

Members Absent: Mayor Robert Hedlund

Also Present: Jennifer Curtis-Whipple, Superintendent; Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Robert Wargo, Assistant Superintendent.

The Meeting Came to Order At 7:00 pm.

The Chair took roll call attendance. See members present and absent above.

Consent Agenda:

The consent agenda included:

- Warrant 52-2020 in the amount of \$1,039,605.39, Dated 6/22/20 presented with an assurance there is money to pay for these items.
- Regular Minutes 5/30/20
- Budget Sub Minutes 6/3/20

Motion to accept the Consent Agenda by Mrs. Nardone, seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll Call vote. Passed unanimously.

Public Comment

The Chair reminded that community members are allowed to speak to items on the agenda and to be mindful to keep comments to 3 minutes. Gail Sheehan requested ahead of time to speak during public comment.

Dr. Sullivan gave an overview of how public comment will work for community members who wish to speak.

Gail Sheehan-shared her feelings on the importance of the Superintendent's evaluation and that it hasn't reappeared on the agenda despite her requests. Mrs. Sheehan stated that she's holding Chair Belmarsh accountable and not attacking her.

Helen Li (Lily's Mom)-7 Babcock Avenue, (617) 652-6600, lilymomloveyou2@gmail.com
Ms. Li shared her feelings on diversity and the multicultural parent council and mentioned she's previously talked to Superintendent Curtis-Whipple regarding an Asian American Council. Ms. Li urges community members to reach out to her via phone or email.

Mrs. Sheehan stated that documents were not available on the school website prior to the school committee meeting this evening and shared her disappointment that there weren't any cuts at administration.

Emily Jackson DeRosa-20 Ashmont Street
Commented that it's a good first step putting the resolution on the agenda and that she hopes the accessibility of zooming for meetings will continue as it is a way for more people to become involved and participate.

Chair Belmarsh agreed with Ms. Jackson-DeRosa.

Report of the Superintendent

The Superintendent shared:

The ESSER grant was successfully approved. Funding will help support Personal Protection Equipment.

Since the school closure over 40,000 meals have been provided to families. The Superintendent thanked Assistant Superintendent Smith, Food service, transportation and administration and central office staff who have helped. Meals will continue to be provided throughout the summer at the Seach School. More information to come.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple thanked Elizabeth Foster Nolan for the suggestion to hang a flag in recognition of LGBTQ pride month. A flag is proudly hanging in front of the administration in recognition and support LGBTQ Pride month.

Many curriculum opportunities have been posted for staff thanks to Assistant Superintendent Wargo and staff. Opportunities include synchronous learning and preparation for learning in the fall.

Abigail Adams streamed live "Rolling Roaries", an end of year award ceremony where students were nominated.

On June 17, 2020 WETC aired the 8th grade promotion ceremony. This year was extra special as it commemorated the final grade of students from the current Chapman building.

Report Cards will be forthcoming via X2 Aspen and mail for primary families. The X2 portal will be open in August for teacher assignments.

Murphy School will now have English Language Learner (ELL) specialists so Murphy students for whom English is a second language may remain at their home school, rather than being transported to an ELL magnet school.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple shared that the Town Budget Management approved the budget, thanked all those who advocated for the school department, and advised that as a result of this vote, staff that had been briefly laid off would be brought back.

Assistant Superintendent Smith shared that meal pick up at Seach will be on Mondays (2 meals) and Wednesdays (3 meals). The menu will be finalized and go out on June 19, 2020. Mr. Smith thanked all those who helped with the program, especially the custodians, maintenance, food service, and transportation staff.

Assistant Superintendent Smith mentioned that the chair of the Town Council's Budget / Management Sub-Committee cited an audit from 2016 that found \$6 million in school funds. Mr. Smith advised that this reference was about an audit that was conducted by Eric Kinsure to determine what funds would be counted as eligible for Net School Spending. Most of the money was related to health insurance and other employee costs paid for by the town side of government.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple gave an overview of net school spending, explaining that money from town budgets can be counted as school spending. As an example, she explained that School Resource Officers are not staff of the school department and their salaries come from the police department. That said their salaries can be counted toward net school spending when reporting to the state because they work in schools.

Dr. Sullivan asked Mr. Smith what percentage of the \$6 million had ever been part of the schools' budget. Mr. Smith said 0%. Dr. Sullivan then stated that the original comment insinuated the money was misplaced and reiterated that it was town money spent on schools and that the \$6 million was a question of accounting, not misappropriated money.

Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that Melanson and Heath conduct the audits now.

The chair echoed the Superintendent and thanked the Assistant Superintendent and staff for all of their hard work in finalizing the budget.

A new summer initiative for staff was sent out inspired by WPS alumni vigil which was held over the weekend. Four different books are available to staff that are appropriate for the current times. Courageous conversation will be conducted during books clubs in the fall. The Superintendent reiterated her support for tonight's resolution.

The Superintendent advised that there is an administrative review of data from the department of education regarding overidentification of students of color, for special education and suspensions. The contract is awaiting the Mayor's signature and once he approves it, this important work can move forward.

Chair Belmarsh clarified that the contract is with Guilfooy and Associates and the purpose for the administrative review is to analyze the information that came from DESE. The Superintendent advised that a deeper look is required concerning overidentification of students of color for special education services and suspension rates. The review will see if there are patterns and if more work is needed to be equitable especially during these times. Alyssa Bosse worked with the legal department and procurement to put together the contract.

Mrs. Curran inquired if September 14, 2020 will still be a day off from school as the Marathon was cancelled for that day. Dr. Curtis Whipple said the town/state hasn't taken the day off the calendar as of yet because for the moment it is still listed as a state holiday. Mrs. Curran also asked for a list of the book club books.

The Chair gave thanks to Dr. Curtis-Whipple, the Assistant Superintendents, Maryann Foley, Alyssa Bosse, Beth Long, and Sue Faiella for the hard and long work of closing out the school year.

New Business

a. Resolution of Affirmation of Support for Black and Brown Staff, Students, and Community Members

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw read the resolution into the record (the full text is attached to these minutes).

Mrs. Curran said especially in light of comments from "Lily's Mom" [Helen Li] in tonight's public comment she would favor having a summit with school staff, students, and community members to personalize the statement to Weymouth. She does not oppose the measure but maybe a conversation could be had in person safely, not on Zoom but in the fall.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw with timing being crucial suggested voting on the resolution tonight and supports a 'summit' and conversation in the future.

Dr. Sullivan understands the motivation to include everyone and have other discussions however he believes in the this time of #blacklivesmatter our students and staff who identify as black and brown are rightly a focus, and in that light this resolution is satisfactory.

Chair Belmarsh suggested adding language to #4 that the Weymouth School Committee supports Mayor Hedlund's approval of the contract for an administrative review of overidentification of racial inequities.

To that end the Chair introduced a substitute motion with appended the above language to the Resolution of Affirmation of Support for Black and Brown Staff, Students, and Community Members. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

b. Special Education Parent Advisory Committee Yearly Summary Report - Andrea Moreland

Ms. Moreland gave an overview of the year in regard to Special Education. SEPAC thanked Allyson Bell, Patti Hayes and Meg Verlicco for all of their guidance and hard work during the closure and challenging time of COVID19, especially with the remote learning plans. Guest speakers at SEPAC over the year included Arc of the South Shore and Officer Jen Pompeo. The annual start of the school year picnic will be canceled due to COVID19. Special recognition and thanks was given to : Ashley Mitchell, Christine Pelegrine, Antoinette Tucci, Daniel Sbarra, Corrine Cox, Diane Kohn, Allyson Bell, Gina Walton, Shannon Boufard, and John Brown. Appreciated and thanked the school committee for their support. Ms. Moreland thanked the board for their hard work throughout the year.

Athletic Update - Mia Muzio, Interim Athletic Director - Athletics Presentation

Interim Athletic Director Mia Muzzio gave an overview of the presentation. Subjects included athletic participation, budget line items, athletic programs, and cost breakdown. Currently there are 22 sports offered consisting of 61 athletic teams (freshman, JV, and Varsity). Gate fees collected to date total \$40K and user fees to date total \$189K of which \$6K is outstanding obligation. User fees are impacted by waivers which total about 10% of student athletes.

Transportation is a growing expense when town busses are not available First Student must be used.

Depending on what the committee decides, spring user fees could be used as credit for an athletic season next year, as credit toward other dues owed or a 'gift' for another student athlete. A refund could also be issued if need be.

The athlete to coach ratio in various sports was discussed.

Unified Sports had a successful season and the goal is to become a National Banner School.

Projected revenue for the 2020/21 SY is \$314K and expenses are projected to be \$424K.

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Superintendent Curtis-Whipple advised that the hope is to fund as many athletics programs as possible but prices are going up and that information regarding the fall season might not be available until late July.

Dr. Sullivan asked about the coach to athlete ratios for swimming and gymnastics and Ms. Muzzio advised that Assistant coaches would be helpful if the budget allowed.

Eighth grade students housed in the high school next year will not be able to participate in football or rugby as they are full contact sports however they are eligible to try out for the lowest level (Freshman, JV or Varsity) of all other high school sports. More information will be provided to 8th grade and high school families.

The Committee thanked Ms. Muzzio for the presentation and its level of detail.

c. Amend the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 contracts with Stoneman, Chandler & Miller for School Committee and Superintendent legal representation on matters involving general school law in addition to special education (Action Requested)

As Town Solicitor, Joe Callanan is unable to take on new issues at this time and to ensure there is legal representation, Stoneman, Chandler & Miller's scope of services will be expanded to include general school law. The Contract is through June 2022.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to amend the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 contracts with Stoneman, Chandler & Miller for School Committee and Superintendent legal representation on matters involving general school law in addition to special education. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

d. Approval of transfer of funds from Maintenance (040) to District Wide EXP (200) for legal settlement purposes regarding Settlement of WEA Arbitration (Action Requested)

Assistant Superintendent Smith explained that this is the 2nd of 2 payments. The transfer is for \$105,000.

Chair Belmarsh advised that when money is transferred between cost centers a school committee vote is required.

Motion by Mrs Nardone to approve the transfer of funds from Maintenance (040) to District Wide EXP (200) for legal settlement purposes regarding Settlement of WEA Arbitration. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Passed unanimously by 5 members. Mrs. Nardone recused herself.

e. Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 School Department Budget in the amount of \$74,392,782 approved by Town Council June 15, 2020 (Action Requested)

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw read a statement into the record detailing the unprofessional treatment of the Superintendent by some town council members.

Mrs. Nardone echoed Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw's thoughts and read her own letter into the record. Mrs. Curran shared her feelings of this being an inappropriate time to read the letters. She stated her opinion for the record that she doesn't agree with wiping out the \$880K revolving fund and believes that Kindergarten tuition should be incrementally decreased. She further stated that she'll vote the budget however she is concerned about the following year.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve the FY2021 budget, seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

f. Space request for Non-School sponsored trip in April 2022, 11 day tour of Europe (Action Requested)

Dr. Sullivan stated with the uncertainty around travel he would normally be concerned about approving the use of space, but that EF Education has made allowances for refunds due to cancellation, so he supports the motion. Dr. Curtis-Whipple shared that EF Education is fabulous and the trips that Kristen Kames runs are a once in a lifetime experience.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve the Space request for Non-School sponsored trip in April 2022, 11 day tour of Europe. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

g. Approval for Superintendent Curtis-Whipple to participate on the board of South Shore Educational Collaborative effective July 1, 2020 (Action Requested)

Superintendent Curtis-Whipple has previously served on the board. Many students receive services from South Shore Education Collaboration and being a member the district receives a discount for those services.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve Superintendent Curtis-Whipple's participation on the board of South Shore Educational Collaborative effective July 1, 2020. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

h. Approval of School Committee Calendar 2020-2021 (Action Requested)

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve of the School Committee Calendar 2020-2021. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Old Business

Assistant Superintendent Wargo thanked the Chair of the Policy Sub Committee, Tracey Nardone for her professionalism and keeping the committee on topic and on task. Mr. Wargo also expressed his thanks for committee members Ms. Palazzo and Mrs. Curran for their productive conversations.

Mrs. Curran recognized the MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees) for making it easier.

a. Policy Section E - Second Reading

No Public Comment

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to combine 2nd and 3rd reading of policy section E. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve policy section E. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

b. Policy Section F - Second Reading

No public comment

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to combine 2nd and 3rd reading of policy section F. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passes 5-1. Mrs. Curran voted no.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve policy section F. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed 5-1. Mrs. Curran voted no.

c. Policy Section G - Second Reading

No comments/changes

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to combine 2nd and 3rd reading of policy section G, titled Personnel. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve policy section G, titled Personnel. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

d. Policy Section H - Second Reading

No comments/changes

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to combine 2nd and 3rd reading of policy section H, titled Negotiations. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve policy section G, titled Negotiations. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

e. Update on Modulars, Adams Renovation and Transportation Building (Town Measure 20072 - Amend Measure 19-017)

Chair Belmarsh advised that the funding measure passed at Town Council and John McLeod is obtaining updated estimates. Dr. Curtis-Whipple gave a summary of the educational plan for the Abigail Adams Building. The bottom level will be utilized for office space, first floor for grades 1-3, spaces for PreK which will help with growth of the early childhood program, and 4 renovated

spaces for Kindergarten. The 2nd floor will be for grades 4 and 5 with a possibility of space for an alternative pathways program for the building grades.

Talks of timeline were discussed with the renovation happening over 2 summers or closing the building for one academic year. The floor of the library will be replaced and renovations to the auditorium have already begun during the closure by the maintenance staff.

Mrs. Curran suggested putting this as an agenda item at the next budget sub committee meeting. The Superintendent agreed and mentioned inviting John McLeod as well.

f. Chapman School Building Update

The Chair advised that at the last meeting color and chair design for the auditorium was discussed and shared that the plan is at 90% submission completion. The next meeting will be on June 23, 2020.

Announcements:

- Chapman School Building Committee-June 23, 2020
- Budget Sub Committee-June 24, 2020-5:30pm, virtually
- Weymouth Market-July 1, 2020-NEW time-2:30pm-4:30pm-WHS Gold Cafeteria: Market will occur in a drive thru manner
- Happy Last Day of School

The Meeting adjourned at 9:25pm on the motion of Mrs. Nardone, seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote - passed unanimously.

Documents Attached to These Minutes:

- Resolution on Affirmation of Support for Black and Brown Staff, Students, and Community Members (version as approved at this meeting)
- Athletic Update presentation
- Letter from Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw
- Letter from Mrs. Nardone
- Updated policies E, F, G and H.
- School Committee Calendar

Respectfully Submitted,



John Sullivan
Secretary

Letter from Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw:

I'd like to be on the record as stating that I believe Dr. Curtis-Whipple is owed an apology by a few Weymouth Town councilors for the way they conducted themselves during this budget process. There is a stark difference between working through professional differences and what we saw from specific Town Council members over the past two and a half months.

The public should know that the initial Town Council letters of concern that were sent to School Administration and SC were written and sent without those councilors having ever reached out to us to ask for facts, explanations, clarifications, or to offer their help in navigating these difficult times. Instead, these councilors chose to circulate statements and conduct media interviews that knowingly spread misinformation and personal attacks.

At Monday night's TC meeting, several councilors repeatedly tried to soften their anti-school rhetoric by stating phrases like, "this is not personal," or "my comments have never been personal."

Many statements made by these councilors were personal, and saying "they weren't personal" doesn't change that reality.

- Dr. Curtis-Whipple: during this budget process, some Town Councilors have called you "reckless" – that's a personal attack.
- Your budgetary practices have been called "irresponsible" – that's a personal attack.
- You and the schools have been subject to a misinformation campaign that questioned – and continues to question – your use of school vehicles, the Districts' use of educational consultants, and your personal ethics – that's a personal attack.
- You have been falsely accused of not speaking to or working with the Mayor's Office on the school budget this year, an accusation that is brazenly false and was spread by a few Town Councilors – that's a personal attack.
- Councilor Molisse has questioned your leadership by writing, and I quote, "...it is time Superintendent Curtis-Whipple begins to lead the Weymouth schools and takes into consideration the students and the Weymouth community." This inflammatory statement suggests that you, Dr. Curtis-Whipple, are not an effective leader and the Schools do not

operate at all times with the best interest of the students and community in mind – that’s a personal attack.

- Anyone who knows you and anyone who knows how much the schools have supported the Weymouth community during this COVID-19 pandemic should be outraged that any member of Town Council would question your leadership or your intentions. Every supporter of Weymouth Public Schools should be outraged by this accusation.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple, you have sat through meetings where letters chocked full of fake news and personal attacks were read into the record at the request of the councilors who wrote them, and you have maintained your professional composure during *numerous* inappropriate lines of questioning that no other departments were subject to during Budget Management Sub-Committee meetings.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple, you are owed an apology by a number of Weymouth Town Councilors for the way you have been treated throughout this budget season, and I’d like to personally thank you for the strength and professionalism you have shown during this budget process.

Councilor Molisse is now asking for an estimate for an additional audit of the school department that would use tax payers’ money to supplement an annual audit that the schools already conduct. It is my belief that this supplemental audit was only brought up to further a grudge that certain Town Councilors have against the schools for a reason that is unclear to me.

Furthermore, the timing of the extra school department audit could not be more inconsiderate of the Herculean tasks the School Department will be working on this summer in terms of planning a safe return to school for students and staff.

Should the Town Council agree to move this extra audit forward at this point in the COVID-19 pandemic when public schools have been charged with almost impossible problems to solve, it will be one of the most anti-schools and anti-school safety motions the Council has ever voted for. It is my opinion that the extra audit is a grudge, and using it to throw a wrench in the work of the schools during such a precarious time is nothing short of reckless.

It is time for this one-sided grudge match to end, and it is time for several members of the Weymouth Town Council to issue an apology Dr. Curtis-Whipple.

Thank you.