

## MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Special Meeting – February 8, 2017

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, February 8, 2017, at 7:15 P.M. in the Large Hearing Room and the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Ellen Grieco, Chair  
Barb Fletcher, Vice Chair  
Jeanne Downs  
Kim Reichelt  
Kathie Steinberg

Also:

Paul Stein  
Superintendent

Brad Crozier  
Assistant Superintendent

The School Committee attended the Finance Committee's Budget Presentation of the FY18 General Omnibus Budget. Chair Ellen Grieco convened the School Committee's special meeting at 7:15 P.M.

### 1. **Attend Finance Committee Budget Presentation of the FY18 General Omnibus Budget and Discussion:**

#### (a) Public Comment:

Town Administrator Nan Balmer addressed the budget process and requested that the Finance Committee recommend a reconciliation of the Town Administrator's and the Finance Director's recommended budget, noting that this might be helpful during the budget process and long term.

Chair Ellen Grieco, on behalf of the School Committee, commented on the Finance Committee's request to reduce the school budget by \$315,000. She provided additional information for the FinCom's consideration, including the budget stepping stones and peer town comparisons. To understand how the Finance Committee arrived at its recommended budget, Ellen asked the following questions:

- What data did the FinCom use to determine the appropriate recommended budget increase in terms of the correlation between the budget increase and the property tax increase
- What peer community information does the FinCom have showing Wayland's budget increases in comparison to other towns?
- Has the Finance Committee calculated the tax rate increase for 2018 if the Town had not voted to use more free cash than the Finance Committee had recommended at the time?

Residents made public comments about the overall town budget. The topics included increase in staffing in the schools and overcrowded classrooms in 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Finance Committee's Chair Dave Watkins presented the FY18 General Omnibus Budget noting the increase of 3.06% over FY17 and the drivers contributing to the increase. The Chair commented that some of the challenges in the FY18 Omnibus budget are capital, personnel, debt levels, and town's Moody Rating. He reviewed the mission and responsibilities of the Finance Committee, as well as its goals and strategies.

The Chair opened up a Q & A period to the public. Kathie Steinberg responded to the earlier public comments regarding issues that warrant an increase in FTE's and school staffing.

The School moved to the School Committee Room. The Chair convened the special session at 8:46 p.m.; the meeting is being broadcast by WayCAM.

The School continued its meeting in the School Committee Room at 8:46 p.m.; the meeting is being recorded by WayCAM.

### 2. **Comments & Written Statements from the Public:**

Tom Sciacca referred to and commented on earlier comments about class sizes. He noted that according to a Tennessee Study in the 1980's and 1990's, class size only matters in Grades 2 and 3. In Tom's opinion, the obsession over class size is not justified by any data.

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Kerri Keenan commented on 4<sup>th</sup> grade class sizes well, noting that walking around the room is a safety issue because it is very crowded. The education is amazing in the classroom, but it takes space and controlling the class can be difficult.

Cliff Hu is also concerned about the Loker 4<sup>th</sup> grade class, and he supports smaller classes.

Sara Morris is a Wayland parent, and as a teacher and according to research, she commented that as the number of students rise, the student/teacher interaction lowers. The teacher loses the opportunities to connect and loses the connections that motivate the students to learn. She asked the School Committee to keep the priority of small class sizes on the table.

3. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Continued Review and Discussion of All School Budgets, Budget Drivers, Assumptions, Fees and Funding Sources, the Budget Book, Budget Hearing Presentation, Frequently Asked Questions, and related Communications:

In preparation for the FY18 budget process, Kathie suggested that the School Committee look into a Special Education Stabilization Fund in terms of how it might be useful as a tool during the budget process. In addition, analyzing the current transportation model and costs for regular education would be useful because these are funds that are not in the classroom. A discussion ensued in terms of the process and going before Town Meeting to ask for stabilization funds and the advantages or disadvantages of receiving these funds.

The School Committee discussed information to include during the Budget Hearing presentation, such as explanation of proposed FTE's, number of benefits packages and the stepping stones in the budget. Barb referred to a chart that was presented to the Finance Committee; the School Committee reviewed. A discussion ensued regarding the FTE's and current benefits packages and the associated costs. A slide containing this information and what the impact will be if the budget is cut will be included.

The School Committee discussed the potential amendment on Town Meeting floor regarding the budget cuts. In addition, the Committee discussed options of potentially raising fees, specifically bus fees, to preserve the stepping stones, coming up with a compromise, or cutting all of the stepping stones. Based on Susan's calculations, Paul noted the revenue that would result if the fees for transportation, athletics or instrumental music were increased.

In terms of what to retain in the budget if money were to be added back, Paul listed his priorities in order: .35 FTE world language immersion program coordinator, including stipends and supplies (\$26,550); .40 FTE for a Middle School writing lab (\$25,200); evening custodial supervisor (\$55,000); stipends for elementary schools (\$9,300); elementary iPad replacement (\$10,000); .50 FTE guidance staff (\$41,264); .60 FTE for a full Middle School writing lab (\$39,000). The total for these priorities is \$206,263. Paul continued with other priorities that included the interdisciplinary classroom FTE (\$25,200), technology assistant (\$28,000), replacement of Chromebooks (\$40,000), and roof repairs (\$15,000). The School Committee reviewed this list in terms of how to move forward. There was consensus that the School Committee would prefer a collaboration and discussion with the Finance Committee regarding the school budget before the School Committee's Budget Hearing.

The Committee continued its discussion regarding the format and process at the Budget Hearing on February 13<sup>th</sup>.

(b) Possible Vote to Approve Revised FY18 Capital Improvement Plan for School Bus Parking:

Barb revised the FY18 Capital Improvement Plan for school bus parking based on conversations with Susan Bottan. Barb explained the intent of approving this CIP for the Finance Committee's consideration, keeping in mind that the busses will remain at the current site until March 2018.

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the revised CIP for school bus parking for FY18.

(c) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Increased Staffing due to Increased Enrollment in Grade 4 at Claypit Hill Elementary School:

Paul informed the School Committee that the current district wide 4<sup>th</sup> grade class has exceeded the limit of 25 per classroom, which is the guideline. Loker is approaching classes of 27 – 28 students and Claypit has one class at 27 already. There are four classrooms affected. Paul recommended that 19-hour aides are added to the classrooms by using funds in turnover savings and transferring money within the same building. There are no benefits involved and the positions would not go past the end of June. Paul strongly recommends adding another teacher for next year. A discussion ensued in this regard. Brad concurred.

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To clarify, Paul added that the teacher assistant is not required to be certified, since he/she does not develop the lessons, but delivers them to a small group of students. However, many Wayland teacher assistants are certified. The levels of responsibility are different.

#### 4. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Possible Vote to Approve the 2017 Middle School Cape Cod Trip:

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the 2017 Middle School Cape Cod trip.

#### 5. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Barb Fletcher, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 10:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

#### **Observers:**

Tom Sciacca, WVN, BUZZ  
Sara Morris, Wayland  
Cliff Hu, Wayland  
Kerri Keenan, Wayland

#### **Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda & Backup Information
2. Finance Committee FY18 Draft Omnibus Budget Proposal
3. Ellen Grieco's Public Statement
4. FY18 CIP for School Bus Parking
5. Middle School 2017 Cape Cod Trip Request