

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – July 28, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, June 23, 2021, at 5:30 P.M. in the Wayland Town Building and broadcast by WayCAM.

*Present were:*

Chris Ryan, Chair  
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair (arrived at 5:33 p.m.)  
Jeanne Downs  
Jessica Polizzotti  
Kim Reichelt

*Also:*

Dr. Omar Easy  
Superintendent

Parry Graham  
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead  
Director of Student Services

Ellen Whittemore  
Director of Finance & Operations

Chair Chris Ryan convened the regular session at 5:32 p.m.; the meeting was recorded by WayCAM.

**1. Public Comment:**

Sean Goodfellow, 60 West Plain Street, expressed his anger, sadness, and confusion around the fact that the WHS football team may not be able to participate in training at Camp Caribou this summer even though other summer camps and sports tournaments are going on this summer and most of the players have been vaccinated. Protocols can be followed as well. Sean asked the School Committee to vote in favor of Camp Caribou.

*Ellen Grieco arrived at 5:33 p.m.*

Finn O'Driscoll, 90 Tavern Road, another WHS football player asked that the School Committee vote in favor of Camp Caribou, given that the State has returned to normal in many ways and it is disappointing that it may not take place for a second year in a row. Camp Caribou is a way for the team to bond and to prepare mentally, emotionally, and physically for the football season.

Angela Young, 11 Bent Avenue has rising 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. She presented some ideas/suggestions for the reopening of the schools in the fall. Ms. Young believes that despite all the sacrifices made last school year, we are in a different place today given the rate of vaccinations among adults and the low numbers of COVID cases in Wayland. Children should not sacrifice again for those people who will not protect themselves and are unvaccinated. People should have the right to make choices and the children should not be forced to wear masks, since the rate of infection for children is very low.

Sara Sun, 171 West Plain Street, commented on her and her children's constitutional right to decline any mandate for mask wearing. She claimed that the School Committee is personally responsible if there is a mask mandate and her child is harmed since, in her opinion, prolonged mask wearing is a threat to her child's safety and wellbeing. Ms. Sun urged the School Committee to let the parents decide and quoted DESE's May guidelines in which restrictions would be lifted.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Marge Taylor, 5 Wayside Road, about parents' expectations for reopening schools in the fall of 2021, as DESE put out a statement last May that school will be in person and full time with all DESE health and safety requirements lifted, including all physical distancing requirements. According to Ms. Taylor, the State also assured parents that restrictions would be lifted for schools in the fall of 2021. Given that summer programs are running with no restrictions and despite the information circulating about the new variants, Ms. Taylor notes that the data and evidence indicates that children are safe in school unmasked and no other restrictions and it is time to move on and refocus on the children.

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Kim Reichelt commented that the article referenced in the previous public comment read by Chris Ryan has been retracted. Kim also asked those in attendance to put on a mask if they are not vaccinated.

### 2. Policy Matters:

(a) Review and Possible Vote to Approve:

- BDFA – School Councils (*passed over*)
- EB – Safety Program (*edited; will revisit*)
- EBC – Emergency Plans (*DESE made a change to comply with state laws*)
- EEAEA – Bus Driver Examination & Training (*edited; Kim will consult with MASC*)
- GBI – Staff Participation in Political Activities (*edited*)
- ID – School Day (*edited*)
- JBB – Educational Equity (*new MASC policy*)
- JC – Attendance Areas (*edited*)
- JII – Student Complaints & Grievances (*new policy*)

The School Committee discussed the policies listed and Kim noted the edits to the new and existing policies. Policy JII is a new policy and the question was asked if anonymous complaints will be investigated and to what degree and/or if students should identify themselves in the complaint.

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to put the following policies out for public comment as presented and revised tonight: EBC, ID, GBI, and JC.

### 3. Special Matter:

(a) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve WHS Football Training at Camp Caribou in Winslow, Maine:

Dr. Easy presented information regarding the possible football training at Camp Caribou this summer from August 23 to 27. In prior years, Wayland and Wellesley High Schools would attend camp together. However, the Wellesley School Committee voted in April against sending the football team to Camp Caribou this year. About 80-85% of the WHS team players are vaccinated as well as all of the coaches.

After speaking with the Health Department, Dr. Easy recommends that the student team be tested before and after camp. He suggested a mandated vaccine for all team players. Upon the team's return to Wayland, a tentative scrimmage is scheduled on August 27 between Wayland and Wellesley. A discussion ensued in this regard.

At approximately 6:20 p.m., there was an outburst by a member of the audience and Chair Ryan asked him to leave the meeting.

The discussion continued, including the timetable for the students to receive a vaccine and the possibility of mask wearing at the football camp. Dr. Easy will consult with school counsel around mandating vaccinations.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the trip to Camp Caribou contingent on Dr. Easy, the Athletic Director, and the football head coach to work together to come up with appropriate health and safety protocols that are documented and will include testing and vaccination requirements but not limited to.

### 4. Superintendent Update:

(a) COVID-19 Response:

- Fall Health and Safety Protocols:

Dr. Easy commented that the current CDC guidelines recommends masks for K-12 students, and DESE recommends masks for students ages 12 and under and social distancing at 3 feet. Pooled testing is also being considered. DESE should release a report by mid-August; however, the guidelines could change and decisions could be left up to school districts.

A discussion ensued and included the possibility of accessing information regarding the percentage of the student population that is vaccinated, preferably by grade level, since it is required that families report all other vaccinations to the schools, such as the flu and measles. Also discussed was instituting a mask mandate for all staff and students regardless of vaccination status, as it is important to have all students attend school in-person given the transitions during the last school year. However, it was suggested that if

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everyone has to wear a mask then there will not be an incentive to get vaccinated going forward.

Parry updated the School Committee about pooled testing for August summer programming. Forty-five families signed up for pooled testing with the majority of students in grades K-5. According to CIC Health, the State could provide financial assistance for the fall. CIC Health is currently engaged in the vendor approval process and indicated that it's possible they could provide more personnel support in the fall. Jeanne reminded everyone that there are funds in the gift account if needed. Dr. Easy also noted that the WTA president is in the process of polling the teachers in terms of who is vaccinated. Currently, 150 have responded and 148 are vaccinated.

The School Committee asked about the classroom setup in the fall as compared to the spring and the possibility of students being able to Zoom into the classroom if home while quarantining.

(b) Financial Matters:

- Update on Bus Contract:  
Ellen Whittemore updated the School Committee on the bus contract for which the Town received one bid from First Student and is currently negotiating the contract. The bus routes are being developed, however, since the bid came in higher than anticipated, bus capacity, ridership and routes are still not certain.
- Update on FY21 Close:  
The year-end report as of today shows \$232,511.78 remaining. Dr. Easy recommended moving about \$100,000 over to the Town to reserve funds for capital projects not done in FY21 for the Claypit and Happy Hollow playgrounds and chairlifts, as well as approximately \$104,000 for unanticipated expenses related to new special education students for whom 1:1 services and transportation are necessary. At the town's request, these funds will be moved into SPED prepay and the Circuit Breaker, since FY21 funds cannot be used for the above-mentioned capital projects.

Jeanne reiterated the reason for the surplus of funds, given the uncertainty last year due to COVID. The savings occurred in the custodial account, substitutes account and lane changes. All COVID expenses were funded by various grants and the operating budget. A discussion followed.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to put a \$100,000 into the SPED prepay or circuit breaker for the purpose of bringing up FY22 operating funds for the town to use for capital projects, particularly the playgrounds and the Happy Hollow chairlift and \$104,291.12 be moved to the circuit breaker to increase the circuit breaker and any funds that exist above that as of August 2 will be turned back to the town.

5. Finance Subcommittee Update:

(a) Update on Summer Capital Projects:

Jeanne Downs noted that the Finance Subcommittee is reviewing its charge. The School Committee reviewed a memo from Louise Miller and Ben Keefe about the status of the pending capital projects. Jeanne added that many of the projects are being delayed due to COVID and the decreased supply chain.

Jeanne reviewed the capital project process during the budget process in terms of funding. The Board of Selectmen and the town prioritize the projects once funding is approved. The following capital projects have been approved and prioritized, but have been postponed; Jeanne explained.

- Loker roof is postponed until summer of 2022 due to a supply shortage.
- Solar resiliency project is postponed to summer of 2022.
- Claypit Hill roof is postponed to summer of 2022.
- Happy Hollow chairlift – the design work is done, the preliminary work will be done this summer, and a temporary chair will be in place until the permanent chair is received.
- Loker chairlift passed the annual inspection and will be done during the school year.
- Claypit Hill playground is postponed, but the Happy Hollow playground will be done this summer, as the contractor does not have the manpower to do both.
- Loker egress doors are on schedule for this summer.

A discussion ensued about the Claypit Hill playground, since it may need to be shut down during the fall to complete

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the work. There are other concerns, such as the children's safety if the equipment is stored on school property.

The school space study and construction was developed by TBA Architects in terms of the utilization of space in the fall, given that social distancing will still be in place. The classroom dividers are delayed and Dr. Easy and Ellen Whittemore are working on an alternative plan. Dr. Easy updated the School Committee and noted his concerns. Ellen Whittemore noted that there are partitions and furniture in storage that can be used temporarily and provided the timeline for implementation.

In addition, Jeanne updated the School Committee on the following projects: fire alarms, intercom and PA system, elementary storage, Loker tile replacement, middle school tiling, locker replacement, Happy Hollow walk-in fridge storage, and ventilation.

Dr. Easy will communicate with the community in terms of the work that will be done while school is in session, such as the Loker roof and the playgrounds given that the work could affect student learning and the utilization of spaces.

**6. Administrative Matters:**

(a) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Proposal regarding School Committee Communications:

The School Committee reviewed the proposal drafted by Jess around the Committee's communication process, such as utilizing the existing Facebook page to provide information about meeting topics, project timelines, etc. Jess will look into other social media platforms, such as Instagram. Links may also be provided to School Committee policies, factual information, and an FAQ. A discussion ensued about the goal and format of offering office hours. Jess will provide an update at the next meeting.

(b) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Change to 2021-2022 School Calendar regarding the Last Day of School and the Juneteenth Holiday:

Since June 19 is now a Federal holiday and identified as Juneteenth, it will be observed according to the school calendar on June 19. However, if the holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed on the Friday before and if on a Sunday, it will be observed on Monday. For the most part, this change will affect twelve-month employees, but if school is in session due to weather-related cancellations, it will also apply to the students and WTA.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to add Juneteenth holiday to the calendar as described.

A discussion ensued about the last day of school and putting in place a super early release that is the same as the day before Thanksgiving with no lunch served. The School Committee will revisit this discussion in August.

(c) Discussion of Appointment of School Committee Representative to the Permanent Municipal Building Committee: Chris added that the Audit Committee also needs a School Committee representative. These community positions will be posted in the all-school news. The PMBC meets once a month and the Audit Committee meets about three times a year.

(d) Review of OML Determinations:

Kim reviewed one determination for the Woburn Public Library, adding that the library received several complaints and violations in a very short time period.

(e) Discussion of Annual Report:

Jeanne and Ellen will work together on the Annual Report which is due to the town by September 30.

**7. Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables Warrants, dated July 28, 2021, in the amounts of \$277,223.67 and \$1,737,371.87

(b) Approval of Minutes: June 23, 2021

Kim noted an edit to the June 23<sup>rd</sup> minutes regarding agenda item #1. Her score was (7-8-6).

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda.

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8. **Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:**

None.

9. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter executive session at 7:48 p.m. for purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wayland Teachers Association (WTA), as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) as discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; and (b) approval of the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: June 23, 2021. 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	X	
Jeanne Downs	X	
Jessica Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	

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

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

10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 8:27 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	X	
Jeanne Downs	X	
Jessica Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Omar Easy, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

**Observers:**

Sean Goodfellow, 60 West Plain St., Wayland  
Finn O'Driscoll, 90 Tavern Rd., Wayland  
Angela Young, 11 Bent Ave., Wayland  
Sara Sun, 171 West Plain St., Wayland

**Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda
2. Policies, EB, EBC, EEAEA, GBI, JBB, JC, JII
3. Capital Facilities Update/July 27, 2020
4. Proposal for Social Media Communication
5. Approved 2021-22 School Calendar
6. Accounts Payables Warrants
7. Minutes of June 23, 2021
8. Executive Session Motion