

WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 16, 2023 at 7:00 PM

This meeting was held in real time via Zoom. Recording may be found here:
<https://cloud.castus.tv/vod/weston/video/652e8b76cf547500086a41f5?page=PLAYLIST>

Questions or comments? Contact: SchoolCommittee@weston.org -
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DOCUMENTS USED

- [Superintendent's Report](#)
- [Superintendent Search Update](#)
- [Governance Subcommittee Update](#)
- [MASC Conference Resolutions](#)

ATTENDING PANELISTS

School Committee: Mr. Kenneth Newberg (Chair), Ms. Maija Cirulis-Gooch (Vice Chair), Ms. Attia Linnard (member), Mr. Jeffrey Lucas (member), Mr. Adam Newman (member), Ms. Keitrice Johnson (METCO Representative to the School Committee), and Mr. Max Zou (Student Representative to the School Committee). Absent: Ms. Courtney Leung (Student Representative to the School Committee).

Also attending: Dr. Karen Zaleski (Interim Superintendent), Mr. Stephen Nembirkow (Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations), Dr. Lee McCanne (Director of Technologies and Libraries), Mr. Derrek Joyce (Secretary to the School Committee), and Ms. Abigail Galton and Ms. Gabriela Friel (Weston High School Students).

OPENING BUSINESS

Chairman's Report (00:00)

With a quorum of the Weston School Committee present, Mr. Newberg calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He explains that both Mr. Newman and Ms. Cirulis-Gooch are present; however, Mr. Newman has joined the meeting remotely and Ms. Cirulis-Gooch is in the next room presenting for the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). He continues to advise that he and Ms. Cirulis-Gooch had a meeting with the Chair of the Select Board to discuss capital planning and continued and enhanced cooperation.

Superintendent Report (01:11)

Dr. Zaleski highlights the first meeting of the High School Graduation Committee where members began to examine the existing graduation time, rain dates, and related logistics. She

continues to provide updates on the A/C initiative, the recent Pumpkin Fest event, High Five Friday at Country School, and the High School Back-to-School night. Dr. Zaleski concludes by honoring High School student Ms. Grace Zeng (not present) for her illustrated edition of the District calendar, as well as Ms. Galton and Ms. Friel for their video project. Ms. Galton and Ms. Friel provide background information regarding their project, which is played for the committee.

Subcommittee Reports (13:11)

Ms. Johnson discusses technical difficulties with disseminating fliers for the upcoming parent social event. upcoming BWMPO events. Mr. Zou provides updates regarding recent and upcoming events within the high school, including upcoming athletic and performing arts events, the upcoming All-School assembly, and PSAT exams.

Public Comment (15:17)

No attendees wished to speak.

OTHER BUSINESS

Clarification on Member Voting Status (15:23)

As Mr. Lou would be logging out prior to the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Newberg prioritized this portion of the agenda. Mr. Newberg briefly explains the history of community members questioning the non-voting member status of the METCO Representative to the School Committee and Student Representative to the School Committee. He continues to advise that he reached out to the District's legal council, who explained the voting status of these positions is governed by state statute and neither School Committee policy or town bylaws could overturn this. He recommends potential avenues for enacting change for those who wish to pursue them.

MAJOR BUSINESS

Student Recognition: Abigail Galton and Gabriela Friel - HS Video Presentation

This portion of the agenda was discussed during Dr. Zaleski's Superintendent Report.

Update on Superintendent Search (18:15)

Note: Zoom crashes prior to this agenda item, and, due to technical difficulties, Mr. Newman is unable to attend a majority of this discussion. The technical issues conclude toward the end of this portion of the agenda.

Mr. Newberg explains that the Permanent Superintendent Screen Subcommittee has undergone orientation and is ranking the 14 applicants in accordance with established criteria. Based on the initial responses, he announces that there may be three tiers of applicants: those who have almost unanimous support from the Screening Subcommittee, those with very little support, and

hedge cases. The Subcommittee will meet later this week to decide which candidates will be interviewed. Mr. Newberg proposes changes to the Superintendent search schedule to provide the Interview Subcommittee with more flexibility. He explains that these changes will not postpone the final stages of the search and the next Superintendent will still be decided on December 6, 2023. He also proposes a schedule for the public portion of the Superintendent finalist interviews. **Ms. Linnard moves to adopt the superintendent search process and timeline as presented, with the anticipated announcement of finalist candidates to occur at the November 6, 2023 school committee meeting, and the public portion consisting of candidate site visits to the Weston Public Schools on Monday, November 27, 2023, a public forum hosted over the zoom platform to occur during the evening of Wednesday, November 29, 2023, and the school committee finalist interviews to occur on Thursday, November 30, 2023 or Friday, December 1, 2023;** Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.

Governance Subcommittee Update (29:28)

Note: Ms. Cirulis-Gooch joins the committee during this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Lucas provides a summary of Weston School Committee's policy reference manual as compared to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees' (MASC) policy reference manual. Overall, the two manuals share 202 items. The Weston School Committee has 78 unique items in its policy manual, while MASC has 46. Mr. Lucas then summarizes the history of the recent policy review conducted by the recently disbanded Policy Review Subcommittee and provides an update on where each policy section stands in terms of being reviewed. He continues to note recent policy guidance issued by MASC. Mr. Lucas concludes by discussing the Governance Subcommittee's goals and proposed action plan for the current school year.

After a brief discussion on the nature and timing of this policy work, **Ms. Linnard moves to approve the Governance Subcommittee's charter and goals as presented in the committee's meeting materials, and timeline as amended during discussion to begin two months later than presented;** Ms. Cirulis-Gooch seconds the motion. Via roll call vote, the motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, Mr. Newman voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.

OTHER BUSINESS (cont.)

Review of MASC/MASS Conference Committee Resolutions (41:30)

Note: Mr. Newman's technical issues resume after voting on the first resolution and he is unable to participate in the remainder of the meeting.

The committee opts to discuss this portion of the agenda next, as the presentation from Mr. Lucas is readily available. Mr. Lucas explains the process by which individual resolutions are created and channeled through the MASC Resolutions Committee to School Committees participating in the conference. He then asks the committee for guidance on the 8 resolutions being discussed at the conference, with the options being to fully support the resolution, support

the resolution following specified changes, or fully oppose the resolution unless materially changed. The Weston School Committee proceed to go through each resolution and decide the following:

1. Full, stable funding for METCO: **Mr. Newberg moves to fully support the resolution**; Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. Via roll call vote, the motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, Mr. Newman voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.
2. Regarding investigations and recommendations for transportation bidding procedures: **Ms. Cirulis-Gooch moves to abstain from voting on the resolution as it is not an issue the district has faced and they cannot make an informed decision**; Mr. Newberg seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.
3. Regional transportation: **Mr. Newberg moves to abstain from voting on the resolution as it is not an issue the district has faced and they cannot make an informed decision**; Ms. Linnard seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.
4. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) coordinator: **Ms. Cirulis-Gooch moves to support the resolution following a change that emphasizes the work rather than a specific position**, so that districts can establish roles that fit their needs; Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.
5. MA School Building Authority: **Mr. Newberg moves to fully support the resolution**; Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.
6. School bus stop arm surveillance act and enforcements and penalties: **Ms. Cirulis-Gooch moves to support the resolution following a change that makes the resolution solely focused on raising the fines**; Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.
7. MCAS: **Mr. Newberg moves to fully oppose the resolution**; Ms. Linnard seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.
8. Safe storage of firearms: **Ms. Linnard moves to fully oppose the resolution**, as this is a public health issue rather than an education issue; Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.

MAJOR BUSINESS (cont.)

SY23-24 Student Enrollment Report

This item will be discussed at the November 6, 2023, School Committee meeting.

SY22-23 Year End Fiscal Report, Free Cash, and Q1 Report (1:04:37)

Mr. Nembirkow provides a summary of SY22-23 spending. He advises salaries represent over 83% of the total budget, with a significant proportion of the savings in Case House's budget representing retroactive pay being set aside for WEA members. When payment was issued after the conclusion of the school year, teachers were paid from their appropriate budget lines, resulting in what appears to be negative balances; however, the overinflation in Case House's budget covers these costs. He then discusses the expenses, representing a minimal total savings of \$17,201, as well as breaks down the revenue offsets. He summarizes that the FY23 budget was well managed and consisted of savings in three areas, Salaries, Expenses and Revenues. He notes the Salaries and Expenses must be returned to the town, which means that that was money not spent on the students and is something to look at in future budgets. Mr. Nembirkow concludes by noting the Town has yet to close out its FY23 financials, which may result in adjustments to the amounts presented.

Mr. Newberg thanks Mr. Nembirkow and hopes that, in the future, the committee is not presented with negative balances. Instead, he asks Mr. Nembirkow to come to the committee with line item transfer requests. Dr. Zaleski, Mr. Newberg, and Ms. Cirulis-Gooch discuss how the new Priority Based Budgeting Process will assist with spending practices.

The Q1 Report will be discussed at the November 6, 2023, School Committee meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS (cont.)

Item Not Reasonably Anticipated (1:24:38)

Mr. Nembirkow advises that the Food Services department would like to increase the cost of soup on the a la carte menu by \$0.25, noting the price has not been adjusted since 2009.

Mr. Newberg proposes appointing individual signers for the warrant per past practice to enable the warrants to be reviewed and pre-signed in advance of a given meeting. Ms. Linnard agrees with the proposal and with the Chair and Vice Chair serving as signers.

There is no objections to either items and they are included in the consent agenda.

Consent Agenda (01:27:09)

Ms. Linnard motions for unanimous consent on the items discussed. She moves to approve and publish the meeting minutes for the Weston School Committee's September 18, 2023 meeting as submitted, moves to approve warrant number 1524 for payment for services and materials actually received by the District, moves to recognize the following student clubs: Wharton Investment Club, Marine Biology Club, Land's Sake Farm Club, Classic Card Games Club, moves to approve the following recommended curriculum enhancements and authorize the payment for the Rob Buyea Author Visit, Archaeological Excavation, and Michael (Mykee) Fowlin, Grade 7 Performance solely from the WEEFC Trust Fund pursuant to the Weston Education Enrichment Fund

Committee Rules and Regulations, moves to authorize the School Committee Chair and Vice Chair to sign warrants on behalf of the School Committee, such signature authorizes the immediate payment thereof but does not absolve the remaining members of their fiduciary financial duties requiring a ratification vote at the school committee's next regularly scheduled meeting, moves to increase a la carte soup costs from \$2.00 to \$2.25 and \$2.50 to \$2.75 as requested by the Food Services department, and moves to adjourn the meeting. There is no objection and the consent agenda is approved by unanimous consent.

NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA TOPICS — October 30, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

- Science Department External Review Presentation
- Enhancing Engineering and Environmental Science Offerings K-12
- MCAS/District Accountability Presentation
- Superintendent's Goals for SY23-24
- Brief Superintendent Search Update

ADJOURNMENT (01:28:55)

Following the motion made by Ms. Linnard when moving the consent agenda, the Weston School Committee adjourns the meeting at 8:29 pm.