

WESTWOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Westwood, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES

September 8, 2022

Attendance and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chair Charles Donahue at the Little Theater at Westwood High School, Westwood Massachusetts. Also present were: Amanda Phillips; Maya Khuri Plotkin; Tony Mullin; and Dorothy Parmelee. Superintendent Emily Parks and Director of Business and Finance Lemma Jn-baptiste were present on behalf of the district.

Riley Harrington, student representative to the school committee, was introduced by Westwood High School Principal Amy Davenport.

Westwood Media Center, which provided a live-stream of the meeting and also recorded it for later viewing on their platforms, was recognized.

Harley Pease recorded the minutes.

Superintendent's Report

Recognition of Interim Principal of the Martha Jones Elementary School, Donna Olson

Superintendent Emily Parks introduced Donna Olson to the school committee.

Summer Programming and School Opening

Superintendent Emily Parks provided updates on the start of the school. School is off to a good start in the district. Superintendent Parks noted that the WPS are still in need of teachers and instructional districts, due to special educators being hired in other districts under emergency licensure.

Extended School Year and Intervention

- Student services department completed extended school year. 125 students participated.
- 80 special education staff worked in ESY.
- General ed. academic support programming occurred this summer, including "Jumpstart".
- High school credit recovery program occurred as well as SIPP.

New Student Orientations

- Open house opportunities for students across all grades had the opportunity for different forms of orientation.
- Parents also had the opportunity for orientation. This occurred on 9/6 with high school administrators.

Elementary METCO Expansion

- Last spring, district staff went to METCO headquarters to build relationships with students and families. Hanlon held a community PTO sponsored community night.
- Over the summer, there was summer programming for METCO students, both academic and social.
- On Sunday 9/11, Westwood Welcome Club is having a Back-To-School Event at Hale Education, 80 Carby Street, from 4:00-6:00 PM.

Safety and Security Protocol Changes

- Steve Trask is the new Director of Safety and Security for Westwood Public Schools. He has revised some protocols, including, but not limited to, staff photos and IDs, visitor protocols, revised emergency protocols and training materials, blue light system installation at TMS, reunification plan, and targeted equipment upgrades, such as cameras.

Updated COVID Protocols for Schools

- Masks are not required (except in health offices). Individuals are welcome to wear masks if they would like.
- There is no longer a COVID response team.

SIPP Independent Project Program

- Katherine Stewart introduced the Student Independent Project Program.
- Emma Adamakis, Ella Allen, Emma Cote, Yvette Easton, Izzy Feinfeld, Layne Fennell, Caroline Kelleher, Tarra Liu, Kaleb Maloof, Joe McEachern, Julia Ritzenberg, Sofia Rosen, Grace Sterling, Ali Tariq presented their SIPP projects.

Westwood Girls Lacrosse State Championship Presentation

Chair Charles Donahue presented headlines from the Boston Globe, the Boston Herald, and other local publications. Charlotte DeMaio, Emilie DeMaio, Haley Kutzer, Ava Connaughton, Lindsey Diomede, Caroline Nozzolillo, Libby Dorsky, Kate Deehan, Lily Bean, Emma Ricci, Catie McGowan, Kendall Blomquist, Olivia Williams, Maddie Lyons, Lil Hancock, Hillary Noble, Katie Krumsiek, Riley Harrington, Cara McManus, Kella McGrail, Dede McCough, and Coach Spatola received plaques commemorating their perfect season.

Public Comments

Chair Charles Donahue invited members of the public to comment on agenda items.

Julie Gervais of Colburn Street and WEAC spoke in support of the solar panel project.

Claire Galkowski of Dover Road spoke in support of the solar panel project.

School Committee Chair Update/Liaison Reports

Chair's Update:

Chair Charles Donahue emphasized the upcoming flu clinic at 10am on October 22nd in the parking lot at the high school.

Westwood should get more involved with the cultural counsel. Westwood Schools have received grants in the past. Deadline is October 17th. Information session on September 13th.

Westwood Hometown Weekly is looking for freelance sports writers.

School Building Project Update

Maya Plotkin reported that blasting has started. Tree mitigation plan will be reviewed and approved by the conservation board and planning board. There will be no cost to the Town.

Brait Builders has been a great partner. Tough summer with the drought. Dust mitigation plan in place.

Superintendent Parks noted how we can bring the kids in to get involved with the project. Mark Goguen will be flying a drone in order to capture progress.

School Start Time Subcommittee

Tony Mullin reported that the community forum will be on October 3rd at Thurston Middle School at 8:00AM. Traffic survey is being looked at. Hoping to implement changes, if accepted, by the fall of 2023.

Policy Review Subcommittee

Meeting upcoming on 9/14.

Other liaison reports

There were no other liaison reports.

Discussion Items

Solar Panel Project

Tom Philbin, Town of Westwood Energy Manager, presented details on phase two of the solar initiative.

If we do nothing, we can expect in January of 2027, a 20-40% increase of costs. The best way to do this is through solar energy. It will provide financial predictability and safety. The high school project would provide an anchor to the viability of the phase 2 effort. The solar initiative will lower our carbon footprint. This is aligned with MA's goal of eliminating fossil fuels.

Mike Bakas, Executive Vice President, Ameresco, introduced Ameresco and provided an overview of Ameresco's capabilities.

Anthony Buschur, Senior Project Developer, Ameresco

Mr. Buschur showcased other communities and their canopies. Mr. Buschur noted that there is an FAQ available for solar canopies.

-Phase 2 – Westwood High School Canopies

Canopy renderings. Walkway would be added. Looks nice as sidewalks would be perpendicular.

Other phase II Projects include the Council on Aging, TMS, Police/Town Hall.

- Integrated LED lighting and controls
- No lost parking spaces
- Zero upfront cost to the town
- Westwood HS Solar Canopy Project Schedule. Summer of 2024 would be the start of construction. It is possible to complete in the summer of 2023.
- Response to Feedback: PPA Rate adjustment to a lower PPA rate, for the first four years to provide positive cost savings throughout the project.
- Community Outreach
 - Community Forum, articles by WEAC, booth at Westwood Day, recorded presentation by WMC.

Additional Notes

- Warranty is for 25 years. Typical use for life is 30 years.
- After 20 years, the Town may buy the system at fair market value or end the system.

Question from Maya Plotkin: If any part of the equipment is damaged, who carries liability?

Answer from Anthony Buschur: Ameresco covers liability costs. 24/7 - 365 support for devices.

Question from Maya Plotkin: Is there any other benefit to the town besides the savings?

Answer from Anthony Buschur: Protection from the weather.

Answer from Lemma Jn-baptiste: Predictability for budget savings. Less of a surprise in operation energy costs. Won't have to make drastic moves.

Answer from Mike Bakas: Commercially, it is advantageous to lower carbon footprint due to carbon tax by the SEC.

Question from Tony Mullin: Inflation-Reduction Act, how does that impact us?

Answer from Anthony Buschur: Lowers rate.

Question from Tony Mullin: Where does the net excess generation go?

Answer from Anthony Buschur: Net excess generation will go out to the grid. This project will have minimal.

Answer from Lemma Jn-baptiste: We would be at 110% of energy renewable. Westwood Schools, as a whole, is currently at 84%. There is no penalty in going over. We don't need to worry about exceeding this percentage. We anticipate that our electric needs are going to rise.

Question from Tony Mullin: What is happening from the municipal side of things?

Answer from Anthony Buschur: Town Hall has potential for a canopy. The canopy was a little close to the police department. We are reviewing zoning and current policies. We (Tom Philbin) are working with the WFD. Not much more can be done with current municipal buildings.

Question from Tony Mullin: Can Hanlon have solar panels?

Answer from Maya Plotkin: The roof is ready. Would need to be a part of a bigger project, not ready to be a part of phase 2.

Question from Maya Plotkin: If we miss that first window (summer of 2023), would Ameresco be willing to hold the construction to the following summer?

Answer from Anthony Buschur: Yes.

Acceptable Use Policy

Steve Ouellette presented the new Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and provided some context for the new AUP.

- Last revised in 2012. Since then, real life situations have come up and have not been addressed by the AUP. This is because times have changed and technology usage has changed.
- Formatting needs to be more coherent. The AUP is in three places.
- New AUP is more readable, with more context. References student data policy. Links to social media and email guidelines. Very similar to the MASC policy. Would incorporate tenants that are more readable.
- We did this work in consultation with the District's counsel.

Anti-bullying Policy

Emily Parks presented the new Anti-bullying policy.

- Only one small change that would model the MASC. The change that is being included references adults.

2022-2023 District Goals

Emily Parks presented the 2022-2023 District goals.

- Last year did not unfold the way we anticipated. A lot of work seemed ambitious given the climate, so we are bringing back some priorities. Many priorities are related to each other. So, what are the action steps for this year?

- One priority is to map curriculum to national standards. The strategic priority for this year is action steps to revise social studies curriculum.
- Outside agencies are providing feedback that have a vantage point that includes other districts. These outside eyes will help us shape our future.
- All of this is posted on the district webpage.

Action items

MOTION made by Tony Mullin to approve installation of solar canopies in the WHS school parking lot. Motion seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: **Yes**
 Anthony Mullin: **Yes**
 Amanda Phillips: **Yes**
 Maya Plotkin: **Yes**
 Dorothy Parmelee: **Yes**

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to approve 2022-2023 District Goals. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: **Yes**
 Anthony Mullin: **Yes**
 Amanda Phillips: **Yes**
 Maya Plotkin: **Yes**
 Dorothy Parmelee: **Yes**

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Dorothy Parmelee to approve the July 27, 2022 meeting minutes. Seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: **Yes**
 Anthony Mullin: **Abstain**
 Amanda Phillips: **Yes**
 Maya Plotkin: **Yes**
 Dorothy Parmelee: **Yes**

Result: 4-0-1 (Approved)

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to approve Emily Parks to be the TEC representative. Seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: **Yes**
 Anthony Mullin: **Yes**
 Amanda Phillips: **Yes**
 Maya Plotkin: **Yes**
 Dorothy Parmelee: **Yes**

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Tony Mullin to approve 2022-2023 liaison assignments. Seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Tony Mullin to accept “Dr. Bob” scholarship. Seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

New Business

Dori: I would like to establish a Superintendent’s Extended Day working group. The Chair agreed and the Superintendent agreed to set up a working group.

MOTION to adjourn by Tony Mullin, seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM.

Documents/Exhibits Used at Meeting

- Clippings from the Boston Globe and Boston Herald
- Potential Solar Panel Project Slides and Presentation with memo from L. Jn-baptiste
- PowerPoint presentation from Ameresco
- Acceptable Use Policy with memo from S. Ouellette
- Anti-Bullying Policy with memo from A. Hanscom
- 2022-2023 District Goals
- Superintendent’s Report Slides
- SIPP Presentation
- 2022-2023 School Committee Liaison Assignments

- Memo from H. Pease to approve Superintendent Parks to TEC Board of Directors
- July 27th, 2022 meeting minutes
- Memo from A. Davenport to accept a new community scholarship