

WESTWOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Westwood, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES
October 12th, 2023

Attendance and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm by Chair Tony Mullin. Also present were: Maya Khuri Plotkin, Amanda Phillips; and JoAnna French. Superintendent Piowar, Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers, and Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste were present on behalf of the district.

Dorothy Parmelee arrived at 6:34pm.

Westwood Media Center was recognized for providing a live-stream of the meeting.

Harley Pease recorded the minutes.

Superintendent's Report

Comprehensive Facilities Planning and Capital Planning

Superintendent Piowar provided the committee with an update on comprehensive facilities planning. Superintendent Piowar charged the full committee with developing the goals and scope of the planning process, as well as reviewing any RFP that is created.

Maya Plotkin provided initial thoughts on the comprehensive facilities planning. Ms. Plotkin echoed the direction that superintendent Piowar outlined.

Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste provided an update on the capital planning schedule and budget requests. An engineering study will come out soon that will instruct the district's five-year outlook.

Chair Mullin asked Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste to provide an update on security planning. Chair Mullin indicated that that plan can be discussed in executive session.

Extended Day Update

Superintendent Piowar informed the committee that a re-tool of the registration process around Extended Day is underway. Secondly, Superintendent Piowar noted that Extended Day has limits in regards to space and scope.

Quarterly Financial Update

Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste provided a brief update on the Q1 Financial Report. The district is spending at a 2% slower rate than last year at this point. The district budgeted appropriately for staffing for School Year 2023-2024. In non-salary budget lines, the WPS expect the Student Services line to only be 8% over budget, compared to 112% over budget last year. For transportation and tuitions, we are roughly on budget. Special education budgeting remains an area of volatility.

Special Statement on the Message to WPS Families from 10/10/23

Superintendent Piowar provided an additional statement in addition to message sent out on October 10th on the recent events in Gaza and Israel.

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

School Committee Chair Update/Liaison Reports

Chair Mullin announced that the first School Committee Roundtable will be on October 17th at 6:30pm in the Westwood High School Professional Development Room.

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Chair Mullin announced that he and Superintendent Piwowar attended Finance & Warrant Commission last night.

Chair Mullin read a message from the High School PTO announcing the Anne Frank – A History for Today is coming to WHS from Wednesday, October 18th through Friday, November 3rd.

Pine Hill Project Update

Maya Plotkin announced that construction continues at the Pine Hill School.

Other Liaison Reports

Dori Parmelee introduced Student Representative Sean Tao to provide an update on the Legislative Council. Some initiatives include, but are not limited to, analyzing environmental impact in the cafeteria and bathrooms.

Discussion Items

FY'25 Budget Preview

Superintendent Piwowar provided current enrollment numbers, the budget development process schedule, and certain budget drivers.

Director of Finance and Operations highlighted specific FY'24 and FY'25 Budget Drivers. These include: personnel costs, Pine Hill consolidation, transportation for ESY, inflationary and supply chain pressures, increased costs, and volatility in special education.

MCAS Curriculum Analysis

Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers presented MCAS Curriculum Analysis for the most recent MCAS as well as testing context.

Highlights included:

- improvement in all areas from 2022-2023
- grades 3-5 very strong
- grades 5 and 6 among highest in state in ELA and math
- grades 5 and 8 science scores very strong

School Calendar

The Committee discussed the school calendar development. Discussion included rationale for certain days off, including Election Day.

Action Items

MOTION made by Dori Parmelee to approve the September 14, 2023 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Roll-call vote:

Anthony Mullin: **Yes**
Amanda Phillips: **Yes**
Maya Plotkin: **Yes**
Dorothy Parmelee: **Yes**
JoAnna French: **Yes**

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to approve the Model UN Field Trips. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Roll-call vote:

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Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Amanda Phillips to approve 2024-2025 Draft School Calendar. Motion seconded by Dori Parmelee.

Roll-call vote:

Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Roll-call vote:

Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 pm.