

WESTBOROUGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WESTBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS
MINUTES

Tuesday

December 18, 2013

The Westborough School Committee meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Chairman, Ilyse Levine-Kanji. Committee members present include Mrs. Nicole Sullivan, Mr. Stephen Doret, Mrs. Jody Hensley and Mrs. Karen Henderson. Administrators present were Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Marianne O'Connor; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Daniel Mayer; Director of Finance and Administration, Ms. Irene Oliver; Student Representative, Addie Egan, and Finance Committee members, Kathy Senie and Edward Behn.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Mrs. Levine-Kanji reviewed the Agenda and announced there would be a need for Executive Session under Chapter 30A, Section 21 for the purpose of discussing negotiations and litigation.

MINUTES

Upon a motion by Mrs. Hensley and a second by Mr. Doret, the Committee voted 5-0 in favor of approving the regular session minutes of December 11, 2013. Mrs. Hensley made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of December 11, 2013, and to hold them because they deal with litigation and negotiation. Mr. Doret seconded the motion and the Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Superintendent O'Connor announced the WHS Debate team placed first in its first time entry in the Boston International Economic Summit, December 4, at Gillette Stadium.

At 1:45 p.m. today, Mrs. O'Connor was informed of a threatening note found in the high school lobby. The Westborough police were called, a sweep of the building was conducted, and nothing has been found. The building's interior and exterior will have overnight security, as well as police presence on campus tomorrow. All teachers and staff have been notified, as well as parents. The Superintendent wishes to assure everyone the building is safe. Contrary to rumors, there was no evacuation and no lockdown. The investigation continues.

Dr. Mayer reported the grades 1-6 report cards were issued electronically. The grade 4-6 report cards have 62 categories of information on student performance. There may be some scaling back on the number.

Ms. Oliver expressed relief the budget preparation has come to an end. Interviews of candidates for the position of Director of Building and Grounds will begin the first week of January.

COMMITTEE REQUESTS AND REPORTS

Addie informed the Committee WHS peer mediators will present to freshmen and sophomore classes at assembly programs. Winter sports are underway. The Winter Concerts continue this week. The postponed band performance will take place January 9. Ned's Coffee House was a success. Rehearsals of Fiddler on the Roof, the spring musical, are underway. The Fales School has issued report cards and the December School Meeting will be held December 20. The Hastings students read 125,694 minutes last month, and earned "Gifts of the Heart" by Patricia Polacco, for the library. The India celebration has ended, and in January, China will be celebrated. Odds Bodkin, a musician and story teller presented an enrichment program. Central Community Grange members donated personalized dictionaries to each third grade student.

Mrs. Henderson encouraged administrators to over-communicate early dismissal notices. The Superintendent noted the DPW did a great job clearing snow so that the schools could open today.

Mrs. Levine-Kanji commended the high school students for collecting 1800 lbs of food for the Food Pantry. She noted there has been some confusion regarding the penalty phase of the Chemical Health Policy. For athletes the MIAA policy is they miss 25% of their contests for a first violation. All students miss 6 weeks of extra-curricular

activities. Athletes can participate in contests after the 25% has been served; they still miss the 6 weeks of extracurricular activities.

Mrs. Sullivan agreed language was added to defer to MIAA regulations, whichever is greater, MIAA or Westborough. If MIAA changes penalties, Westborough has to be in compliance.

Mrs. Henderson stated the penalties should not change, but the language should be cleared up. Mr. Doret asked that the text be reviewed, and changes made to accomplish the goal.

FY14-15 BUDGET MOTION

Mrs. Doret made a motion to approve the Superintendent's Budget as presented. Mrs. Henderson seconded the motion. The total FY14-15 Budget is \$43,743,054. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion.

The Budget must be received by the town manager December 20. The Finance Committee will invite the School Committee to give a presentation at a later date. Mrs. Hensley felt the Budget was much more streamlined and focused this year. Mrs. O'Connor and Ms. Oliver spent a great deal of time over the summer aligning it with the FinCom requests.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

A survey has been prepared and emailed to school staff and parents; it will appear in the Patch and in the Globe. There have been 100-200 responses already. Thanks were extended to all those involved in the printing and distribution of a superintendent search brochure. It will be posted on SchoolSpring, on the MASC website, and in Education Week for a month. Six resumes have already been received. A review of the survey responses will be placed on the January 8 Agenda.

Mrs. Levine-Kanji polled other districts inquiring whether searches were done by themselves or outside firms. Either way, they received excellent candidates. The Committee needs to decide whether to hire MASC or an outside firm to conduct the search; decide what tasks they can help with for a fee or no fee; provide help in screening candidates. Appointments need to be set up, resumes screened, interview questions developed; references checked. Eight to ten applicants should be chosen the first round, decreasing to 3-5 the second round. Resumes, due January 20, may be screened in Executive Session as well as the first round of interviews. The second round must be in Open Session.

Mrs. Sullivan felt the School Committee should review the resumes. Mr. Doret suggested the January 22 meeting be set aside for that purpose.

It was suggested decisions be made at the January 8 meeting on the timeline and how to proceed with the process. A search committee and its make up should be discussed as well as ranking of questions.

Mr. Doret questioned how two school committee members serving on a search committee benefit the rest of the members. He also felt all school committee members should review resumes. He suggested video taping candidate's responses.

Questions should be prepared by all stakeholders. Some will be working with the person on a daily basis. All five members should decide on the final questions to be asked.

Dr. Mayer cautioned that some candidates do not wish to go public with their application during the first round. Video taping may make some candidates uncomfortable.

The Committee discussed search and focus committee participants, the general public's participation, and the role they will play. Also considered was hiring a facilitator and training of the focus groups.

Mr. Doret suggested the drive should be the results of the survey. People also have the opportunity during final interviews to give input and ask questions. If the search timeline is not working, it can be adjusted. The Committee discussed the makeup of the search and screening committees.

The January 8 meeting will schedule time to look at a sample of questions, rating sheets, categories of participants, whether to hire MASC to check credentials and perform background checks. The School Committee must do reference checks.

MOTION

At 7:25 p.m. Mrs. Sullivan made a motion to enter Executive Session under Chapter 30A, Section 21. Mr. Doret seconded the motion and the Committee voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote.

At 8:25 p.m. the Committee returned to Open Session. Bills were signed.

MOTION

At 8:26 p.m. Mrs. Henderson made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Sullivan seconded the motion and the Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Doret, Secretary

Documents presented to the Committee:
Minutes December 11, 2013
Student enrollment figures

These minutes are as recorded by the secretary to the school committee and do not become an official part of the record until so noted in a subsequent record.