

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
February 8, 2022
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Those present included Chair Catherine Mirick, Vice Chair Linda Chow, Secretary Leda Eizenberg, members Melissa Martin and Jim Roberti; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent Sandy Trach; Assistant Superintendent Cynthia Mahr; Advisory Member Susan Clapham; and Student Advisory representatives Rachel White, Ivy Wang, Sofia Dobado, Jeremy Lee, Evelyn Harrison, and Abraham Budson-McQuilken.

Ms. Mirick announced that the meeting is being held remotely and recorded by local media and broadcast live by Wellesley Media.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sharon Gray, of 12 Arnold Rd., stated that as a former School Committee member she has followed the Hunnewell Track & Field proposal process closely and noted the decision-making process remains unclear after watching the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meetings where the topic was discussed. She stated her concerns that there has been no indication when a vote will be taken, no feedback from NRC on the proposal, and no public hearings by NRC. She added she will be emailing her comments to NRC.

Susan Calcio thanked the School Committee for its commitment to children and schools. She read a letter with over 500 signatures from members of the community that was sent to the Committee today. The letter outlines the parents' concerns about the impacts on continued COVID mitigation efforts and urged the District to allow the mask mandate to end February 28 in line with DESE guidance in an effort to transition towards normalcy.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Chow offered updates on the Hunnewell Track & Field projects. The bathrooms will go before the Wetlands Protection Committee in March. The Playing Fields Task Force (PFTF) will hold a meeting February 11 where Ms. Chow will update them on the lighting proposal and answer questions. She noted she would be interested in a joint meeting with NRC. She also urged the public to share their comments with the School Committee and NRC.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Lussier applauded the leadership of Ms. Chow and Mr. Roberti around the Hunnewell Track & Field proposal process. He noted they have done their best to attend to various concerns around environmental and traffic issues and have been as responsive as they possibly can.

A community update for the Hunnewell community on internal swing space planning was held February 7 and was attended by approximately 80 members of the Hunnewell community. Topics included grade level distribution and transportation. He added there were great suggestions and comments from parents about creating seamless transitions for kids. The full slide deck from the presentation will be posted on the front page of the WPS site.

He offered a COVID update. The trajectory continues to improve with case counts continuing to go down. Currently the indoor mask mandate for schools as established by DESE is set to expire on February 28. The hope is that it will expire and localities will be allowed to transition from a mandate to being mask optional. For WPS, there are ongoing conversations with the

Health Department and it is the belief that mitigation strategies can begin to be safely relaxed. The consensus is for this transition to take place Monday, March 7, allowing for a week after break to assess any impact or changes in trajectory of the virus. Discussions will take place with WEA by way of the Joint Labor-Management Committee (JLMC) regarding masks, lunch protocols, and other mitigation details. He added that unless there is further guidance, masks will remain mandatory on transportation vehicles, as that is a federal mandate. Additionally, spectator mitigations for sports and arts have been lifted.

Attorney John Davis joined to discuss the lawsuit recently settled with Parents Defending Education. Dr. Lussier read the District's [statement](#), which is also posted on the WPS website. He noted this outcome protects the right of WPS to utilize affinity group sessions and anonymous reporting of bias-based incidents. The Committee thanked Mr. Davis and Attorney Seth Barnett for all their work. Members expressed they were grateful the District will be able to continue its valuable equity work.

Finally, Dr. Lussier stated formal bargaining with WEA for their contracts will begin February 9. Contracts for all five units will be negotiated. Ms. Mirick and Ms. Chow will be part of the bargaining team.

STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT

Ms. White stated students began picking up their home testing kits the previous week. She thanked the parent volunteers and district administration. Additionally, student representatives were planning to attend a rescheduled orientation Sunday, February 13.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes - January 25, 2022 and February 3, 2022 Open Session
Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes - January 19, 2022 - AM and PM Sessions, January 20, 2022

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

MOVED: Ms. Eizenberg; SECONDED: Ms. Chow; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Roberti - Yes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

WMS PAVING PROJECT

Ms. Martin stated there will be a virtual presentation and meeting for abutters on February 16. Postcards will be sent out for applicable individuals to attend and learn how the project will affect them for the summer. There will be an opportunity for a Q&A session at that time. The project will be presented to Advisory the first of March, as it is a Town Meeting article.

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion to support the Wellesley Middle School paving project as presented to the School Committee on January 19.

MOVED: Mr. Roberti; SECONDED: Ms. Chow; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Roberti - Yes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

FY23 BUDGET

Ms. Mirick offered a summary of the timeline that led to the completed recommended FY23 budget.

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion that the School Committee vote to approve an FY23 operating budget of \$84,802,267, which represents a 2.74% increase over the FY22 operating budget.

MOVED: Ms. Chow; SECONDED: Mr. Roberti; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Roberti - Yes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion that the School Committee vote to approve an FY23 cash capital budget of \$998,905, inclusive of furniture, fixtures, equipment and information technology, to send to Town Meeting.

MOVED: Mr. Roberti; SECONDED: Ms. Eizenberg; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Roberti - Yes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Ms. Mirick stated the next steps were for Dr. Lussier and Ms. Mahr to present the budget to Advisory on February 9 then it will go to Town Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 7:23 pm, Ms. Mirick entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOVED: Mr. Roberti; SECONDED: Ms. Martin; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Roberti - Yes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Leda Eizenberg
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

FY23 Budget Publication

FY23 Budget Update and DEI Presentation 1.25.22