The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Those present included School Committee Chair Matt Kelley, Vice Chair Melissa Martin, Secretary Linda Chow, members Sharon Gray and Jim Roberti; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent Cindy Mahr, and Director of Human Resources Gayle McCracken.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Kelley entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wellesley Teachers Association because, as Chair, he declared that having such discussion in Open Session would have a detrimental effect on such bargaining; to allow (1) Superintendent David Lussier, (2) Assistant Superintendent Cindy Mahr, and (3) Director of Human Resources Gayle McCracken to participate in the discussion; and to reconvene in Open Session after the conclusion of the Executive Session.

**MOVED:** Ms. Gray; **SECONDED:** Ms. Martin; **ROLL CALL:** Ms. Martin – Yes, Mr. Roberti – Yes, Ms. Gray – Yes, Ms. Chow – Yes, Mr. Kelley – Yes.

**VOTE:** Yes – 5, No – 0.

At 6:30 pm, the Committee reconvened in Open Session. Ms. McCracken left the meeting.

**OPEN SESSION**

The Committee returned to Open Session at 6:30 pm. Those present included Committee Chair Matt Kelley, Vice Chair Melissa Martin, Secretary Linda Chow, and members Sharon Gray and Jim Roberti; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendents Joan Dabrowski and Cindy Mahr; and Student Advisory member Chris Kolb. Mr. Kelley announced that the meeting is being recorded by local media.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Committee was joined by a number of Upham School parents and Upham staff who addressed their concerns with single section grade levels. Upham parents Stephanie Hubbard, Amy Gottschalk, Rose Nolan, Jaret Stickney, Hyunsook Song, Aisha Usmani, Maggy Gabriel, and John Muckle spoke, as well as Beth Garry, representing WPS faculty.

Ms. Gottschalk and Ms. Hubbard presented a petition from the Upham community formally requesting that the School Committee institute a policy mandating a minimum of two sections per grade level at all WPS elementary schools before a neighboring
school can open a third section. They addressed their concerns with single section grade levels, reviewed each elementary school’s sections and current enrollment data versus the 2010 census data.

Ms. Garry, Upham Grade 4 teacher, representing staff from each elementary school, submitted a letter signed by 135 elementary staff members addressing their concerns with single section grade levels, and spoke to some of the concerns mentioned in the letter.

Ms. Nolan, Mr. Stickney, Ms. Song, Ms. Usmani, Ms. Gabriel and Mr. Muckle each discussed their specific experiences and concerns with a single section grade level.

**Recognitions**

Dr. Lussier recognized the following individuals and groups:

From WMS Principal Mark Ito: Congratulations to the **Science Olympiad After-school Club** team that placed third at the State Science Olympiad. This afterschool club provides students the opportunity for extracurricular STEM learning that culminates in a State-wide competition every March. The team consists of 45 6th, 7th and 8th grade students led by a volunteer parent, Suze Nock, and two faculty coaches, Cathy Longley-Cook and Kathleen Derian. Students spent six months preparing in 23 different events, many of which align with and extend the State curriculum. We continue to be impressed with the extent of mastery required of this age group.

From Linda Corridan, Department Head for Nursing Services: Thank you to Lauren McCarthy and Lauren Frazier, - Middle School Fitness and Health teachers, for their willingness to provide CPR certification programs for teachers and staff. As a result of a WEF grant, they presented a CPR program at all 10 schools resulting in the certification of 110 teachers. This is a great accomplishment and speaks to our continued support for safety initiatives throughout the district.

From Michael LaCava, K-12 Director of Performing Arts: Congratulations to the three **Wellesley High School Performing Arts Ensembles**, and their Directors Mr. Scott and Dr. Khanukaev for representing WPS so well at the annual MICCA Music Festival.

The **Wellesley High School Wind Ensemble** received a Gold Medal representing a Superior Performance for their program. Two Wellesley High School Orchestras also performed on Saturday with the **WHS Sinfonia** receiving a Silver Medal representing an Excellent Performance for their program and the **WHS Honors Chamber Orchestra** received a Gold Medal representing at Superior Performance for their program.

By receiving a Gold Medal at the MICCA festival, the ensemble is recognized as one of the most outstanding groups in the state representing the highest of musical standards and performance.
SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS
Ms. Chow congratulated WEF and all involved in the STEM Expo held on April 6th. Well over 3,700 people were in attendance. She reported the Strategic Plan Advisory Committee met before spring break and continue to make progress, with the current focus being on the architecture of the strategic plan. There is also consideration of extending the timeline to allow for some additional staff work over the summer for presentation to the community in early fall for feedback, and then submitting the plan to the Committee.

Ms. Gray reported there is a presentation at the high school this evening by Dr. Lester Hartman on the dangers of vaping and juuling.

Mr. Kelley thanked Town Meeting and the community for its continued support of Wellesley Public Schools.

Ms. Martin thanked the community for its support of the Middle School building SystemsProject. This project is moving forward, with the programming work on the design process taking place with Middle School faculty prior to the end of the school year. She also reported on a WEF-funded event held at the high school with Lynn Lyons titled Anxious Kids Anxious Parents. Thank you to WEF for its continued support of WPS.

Mr. Roberti attended the STEM Expo and was impressed with the work of students and the impressive number of people in attendance.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT
Dr. Lussier also thanked the community for its support of the school budget and acknowledged the balance between the needs and requirements to remain a district of excellence and the need to be a fiscally responsible partner of the Town. He also reported the position of Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion has been posted. He appreciates the number of people interested in being part of the interview team, and although the interview team will be limited in its membership, there will be opportunities for community engagement as well as student feedback. He announced that Director of Student Services Lori Cimeno has accepted a position closer to her home. This position was posted prior to spring vacation week and interviews will begin soon, with the hope of a permanent appointment made before the end of the school year. Dr. Lussier also announced the retirement of Sprague Principal Susan Snyder at the end of the school year. Finalist interviews for this position have been held and it is hoped to have a decision by the end of April. Dr. Lussier acknowledged the students of color who organized a sit-in and walk out at the high school just before vacation week. He praised them for their courage in sharing some of the pain they have experienced through micro aggressions in school, as well as in the community. This gave the WPS staff pause to consider what actions can be taken to ensure WPS is an inclusive community. Staff is working with the students and colleagues to keep the conversation ongoing and taking steps to address these issues, including increasing the diversity of staff, increasing professional development for staff, and working on curriculum.
CONSENT AGENDA

- Minutes Approval: March 25, 26, and April 2, 2019 Open Session and March 26, 2019 Executive Session.
- Gift Acceptances
- Trip Approval: Northern Spain - April 2020
- New England Medical Invoice Approval - $721.69
- Declaration of Surplus: Schofield Library books
- Declaration of Surplus: WHS Library Books
- Declaration of Surplus: File Cabinets - Student Services

Ms. Chow distributed a copy of the Executive Session minutes for March 26, 2019. After a brief discussion upon a motion made by Ms. Gray and seconded by Ms. Chow, the Committee VOTED to approve the March 26, 2019 Executive Session minutes as written. The vote was 4 in favor; 1 abstention.

After a brief discussion upon a motion made by Ms. Gray and seconded by Ms. Chow, the Committee unanimously VOTED to approve the balance of the Consent Agenda as amended.

K-12 WORLD LANGUAGES UPDATE

The Committee was joined by Tim Eagan, Gr 6-12 Department Head of World Languages, and Bárbara Barnett, K-5 Department Head of World Languages, who presented updates on the implementation of World Languages in grades K-12.

Ms. Barnett started the presentation by introducing the K-5 Spanish teachers. She then provided an update on the SY18-19 Spanish FLES implementation including staffing and scheduling. She reviewed the Spanish FLES survey results from parents and teachers, and provided an overview of student progress using language proficiency assessment.

Mr. Eagan then discussed the implementation plan for bringing World Languages to Grade 6 in SY19-20 including timeline, scheduling and offerings which include French, German, Latin, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. He indicated FTEs and scheduling of the number and types of classes are difficult to determine at this time as enrollment information for the Middle School is just starting to come in. Mr. Eagan provided an introductory review of the curricular approach teachers will use for World Languages at the Middle School including unit plans, differentiation and connections to literacy.

Committee members asked questions relative to curriculum development; how students who have learning issues will be accommodated; will there be opportunity/accommodations for students who start in one language but choose to change to a different language; how will differentiation work for those students in grade 6 who have not taken a language before Middle School and will be in the same class with those students who taken Spanish for several years?

After addressing these questions, Mr. Eagan and Ms. Barnett were thanked for their thorough presentation.
DISCUSSION: POLICY JG – STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT

Dr. Lussier provided the background work that culminated in the development of School Committee Policy JG which includes a provision for the closing of grade levels once student enrollment reaches certain thresholds, with new students being reassigned to nearby schools with capacity. Additionally, he discussed the restructuring of the District’s Open Enrollment policy that provides for a more robust policy that allows families choice to attend schools outside of their neighborhood schools subject to space availability. These remedies, while not always popular, have been extremely effective in maintaining equitable class sizes across schools.

Mr. Kelley expressed his desire to ensure that whatever is decided should be based on the District as a whole, rather than for specific individual events.

Mr. Roberti expressed concern with the proposal to mandate not having less than two sections per grade level as it is too restrictive and may result in very small number of students in grade sections. In addition, whatever is considered must be balanced with fiscal responsibility to the town. He discussed options used in Newton and Brookline that use bans or buffer zones around districts, and perhaps re-implementation of multi-grade classes should be considered.

Mr. Kelley indicated the Redistricting Committee of 2013 addressed bans and buffer zones, and when this was explored with the communities that use them, it was determined that they are difficult to manage.

Ms. Gray acknowledged that the Committee has been struggling with this issue for quite a while and wondered if any short term solution that is considered could be implemented through Committee policy and then be sunsetted once the school projects are complete. She also wondered whether there should be a review of class size guidelines.

Ms. Chow is concerned that setting guidelines for smaller classrooms creates other issues, and wondered if multi-grade classrooms could be considered as a short term solution.

Ms. Martin opined that the current policy has achieved goals across the district, but has also been a burden to a smaller subset of families. She questioned the implementation of the proposed 2 section per grade level requirement and what would happen if there were only 16 students in a particular grade level in a given year.

There was discussion concerning adding flexibility with open enrollment and the number of spaces that would be kept available in a section for neighborhood children when there is a classroom that is over guideline in a school, but there are not enough children for two sections. There is concern with the timing of setting sections as it relates to notification to staff and developing class configurations.

Dr. Lussier indicated that the two questions that should be considered are: the number of sections in a grade level and class size - how small is too small? He also does not
feel that multi-grade classes should be created for short-term logistical reasons. He believes it is critical to have consistency in carrying out policy and not applying different standards for different situations. He felt revisiting policy around open enrollment could be reviewed to provide more flexibility.

Committee members are supportive of exploring Dr. Lussier’s recommended path forward, while still considering the potential fiscal challenges that may result and how this will be perceived by members of the Selectmen and Advisory Committee.

After a lengthy discussion, it was decided this issue will be brought to the Policy Subcommittee for discussion, including minimum classroom size, allowing fewer Open Enrollment minimum spaces later into the summer, and perhaps exploring some flexibility around Upham’s specific issue. No one was comfortable with reassigning students from their own home school to create an additional section in another school.

The Committee thanked community members for sharing their concerns.

**FY19 Third Quarter Financial Report**

Ms. Mahr presented the FY19 Third Quarter Financial Report for the District. She reviewed the Salary and Other Compensation and Expenses accounts and transfers totaling $228,471 for the second and third quarters. Ms. Mahr reviewed Special Education expenses noting they have been stable and she anticipates that, based on the favorable budget position of the District projected in the FY19 Quarter 3, the District is able to carry forward into FY20 at least $255,000 from the Circuit Breaker account.

Ms. Mahr also informed the Committee that further review of instructional assistants and paraprofessional hours is required for FY19 and beyond.

Committee members asked clarifying questions and thanked Ms. Mahr for the presentation.

**Vote: SC Representative for the MSBA Design Selection Panel for Hardy/Upham Project**

*Ms. Chow removed herself from the table at 9:18 pm*

Ms. Gray reported the Hardy/Upham OPM project manager has been selected and is on board. The next step is to hire a designer. The RFQ for designer services went out earlier this month with proposals due on May 1st. The SBC will then review the proposals and meet with the MSBA’s Designer Selection Panel in June to select the designer. Ms. Gray indicated the Designer Selection Panel is a 12-member panel and 3 members of the SBC are invited to join the MSBA in the selection process. The statute requires the panel include representation from the superintendent or designee, the School Committee, and Chief Executive Officer in the town. The Selectmen have chosen Steve Gagosian to represent them at the MSBA; School Committee must select a member; and Dr. Lussier will be the District’s representative.

After a discussion, upon a motion made by Ms. Martin and seconded by Mr. Roberti, the Committee **VOTED** to appoint Sharon Gray as the Committee’s representative to the
MSBA Design Selection Panel for the Hardy/Upham Project. The vote was 4 in favor; 1 abstention.

Ms. Chow rejoined meeting 9:24 pm

**HUNNEWELL AND HARDY/UPHAM PROJECTS UPDATE**

Ms. Gray reported a public forum for the Hunnewell project is scheduled for May 9th, from 7 to 9 pm, in the WMS Auditorium.

Topics that will be addressed at the April 25th SBC meeting will primarily be swing space for the Hunnewell project. Dr. Lussier and Hunnewell Principal Ellen Quirk will be sharing details of the proposal for an internal swing space concept and its cost. SMMA representatives will present on a final recommendation on how to proceed with the sustainable aspect of the building. Scheduling and the final status of the building options will also be discussed.

Ms. Gray indicated that the overall recommendation will include one design option for the building, a parking solution, preferred swing space solution and the sustainability approach for the building. These components will be discussed by SBC over the next several weeks.

Mr. Roberti discussed questions he has received from the public relative to the parking proposal, internal swing space concerns, decisions relative to the building option and concerns of the Historical Commission representative regarding the SBC.

Ms. Gray clarified that the SBC has not reached consensus on any of the components of the project. She has discussed the Historical Commission’s concerns with them on a number of occasions, and the Historical Commission representative has been invited by the SBC to be part of the architectural group. She indicated the SBC is charged with finding a solution that the community can support and one that the SBC hopes to share in about five weeks.

Ms. Martin acknowledged that some of these issues are challenging and forums have been held to inform the community. A lot of dynamic engagement and discussion has occurred at the SBC meetings with representation from many Town boards and departments. She recognizes that whatever solution is decided will not meet everyone’s wishes, but hopefully will meet the needs of the Town and the students.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Hyunsook Song, 73 Old Colony Road, moved to Wellesley 3 years ago with 3 children. She expressed concerned with what she perceives as a lack of urgency on the topic of single sections, and is also concerned with the social and educational impacts of single section grades on children. She urged the Committee to move quickly in amending its policy.

Aisha Usmani, Upham parent, addressed small class sizes and cited several studies regarding significant positive impact of small class sizes on students.
Marggy Gabriel, Upham parent, reiterated the importance of having a minimum of two classes at each grade level.

John Muckle is the parent of a child in the Skills Program at Upham and has a daughter at Sprague, which is their home district. His daughter did not get into kindergarten at Upham this year due to the single section. He encouraged the Committee to consider placing siblings of students in the Skills Program in the same school to avoid logistical hardships.

Ms. Hubbard and Ms. Gottschaulk reviewed the number of families redistricted due to enrollment issues last year and enrollment projections for future years. They encouraged the Committee to consider other options to help alleviate single section grade levels.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE LIAISON**

Ms. Jane Andrews is looking forward to the May 9th Hunnewell forum. She is hopeful that good feedback is received from the community and that there is a good process going forward with the school projects.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At approximately 10 pm, upon a motion made by Ms. Gray and seconded by Ms. Martin., the Committee *unanimously VOTED* to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Kelley
Chair

**Documents and Exhibits Used:**

Trip Approval Form: Spain 2020
NE Medical Invoice WELLE1812
Memos: Declaration of Surplus Property – Filing cabinets, Schofield Books, WHS Books
Memo and Presentation: FLES
Memo: Upham Grade Level Options
SC Policy JG – Student Enrollment and School Assignment
FY19 Quarter 3 Report and Presentation
Letter from Elementary Staff – Single Grade Level Concerns
Upham Reps Enrollment Charts