

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
June 2, 2021
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm. Those present included Chair Linda Chow, Vice Chair Melissa Martin, Secretary Catherine Mirick, members Leda Eizenberg and Jim Roberti; and Superintendent David Lussier.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Neal Glick, of 89 River St., is a parent of a 3rd grader. He thanked the Committee for their service. He stated he believes the Black Lives Matter flags displayed at the schools as well as related presentations and readings are political speech. The organization does not belong in schools. He does not believe it is possible to separate the flag, logo, and sentiment from the political organization.

Jeanne Mayell is an abutter to the Hunnewell Track & Field. She has changed her views on the project after watching the abutter's meeting and learning more about it. She supports the schools and was a sports parent and coach. She is against lights at the field, as she does not feel they are necessary. She is concerned the District will expend unnecessary political capital on a project that has not been properly vetted.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Chow stated there will be another forum regarding Hunnewell Track & Field lights scheduled for June 2nd at 7:00 pm. The public can go to the town's website under the Current Projects section then click Hunnewell Track & Field and there will be a link posted.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Lussier stated there will be a prom event happening June 2nd at the high school, as opposed to the usual venue in Boston. There will be dancing and music happening outside the cafeteria. He noted they were pleased to be able to host the event for the seniors and are thankful for the parent and staff volunteers for making it possible.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes from May 7, 2021

Re-Vote: Declaration of Surplus Library Books - Wellesley High School

Ms. Chow explained the re-vote was necessary due to an error that previously denoted the declaration of surplus library books being for Fiske as opposed to Wellesley High School.

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

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

FY22 ENROLLMENT PLANNING

Ms. Chow reminded the Committee and the community that at the previous meeting there had been a discussion about possible steps that could be taken to redirect students to Upham in order to bolster sections, particularly in grades K-2. She noted Ms. Eizenberg had offered to draft a proposal to be discussed at this meeting.

Ms. Eizenberg explained the proposed implementation of policy JG regarding class size and number of sections in order to mitigate low enrollment at Upham, particularly in grades K and 1. She stated the goal is to close some sections, particularly grades K and 1 at Sprague and Bates, before they reach guideline and place at Upham new students to Wellesley who would be enrolled in those sections. She noted this would only impact new families, no current student would be moved. There is also language included explaining that students who have specialized programming needs would not be impacted. It would also extend open enrollment if current families want to enroll in Upham. Additionally, for any family assigned outside their neighborhood school to Upham, younger siblings would be able to enroll at Upham when they reached kindergarten. This would ultimately serve as a bridge to keep Upham sections strong until redistricting occurs.

Dr. Lussier offered an update on enrollment numbers. He stated the open enrollment placements and children of staff placements are nearly completed. Since the previous meeting, the numbers are a little higher at Upham. Currently there are 24 kindergarteners and 21 first graders.

There were two main points of discussion with the Committee. The first focused on transportation. Ms. Mirick asked if there could potentially be an increase in the need to transport students who are assigned to Upham and live more than two miles away whereas they would not live more than two miles away from their neighborhood school. Dr. Lussier stated it was difficult to estimate how many new families will move in and where, especially in this unusual year. He added that currently the overall trend is not moving in the direction of a lot of new enrollments coming in.

There was discussion around at which point sections at Bates and Sprague would close. Ms. Chow and Ms. Mirick expressed their preference to allow sections to reach the low end of guidelines before closing them. Ms. Mirick acknowledged the need to be able to explain and justify these decisions to the public and at Town Meeting and having too many sections under guidelines could make that difficult. Ms. Chow noted that currently the only grade and school where the minimum guideline has not yet been met is Bates kindergarten. Mr. Roberti stated it was important to be sure the students in the Skills program at Upham had integrated classrooms with their peers, which is difficult to do with very low section numbers. Ms. Martin added she believed it was important to equalize class sizes across the district. It was discussed that, under the current proposal, these early closures would be for this year only and the section sizes would be looked at next year after initial enrollments were completed, therefore if the decision was made to close sections early again, it would again only affect new families.

Ms. Chow entertained a motion to approve the implementation guidelines for policy JG dated May 2021 as amended.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

INCLUSION OF PHOTOVOLTAIC ARRAYS IN HUNNEWELL AND HARDY PROJECT

Ms. Martin explained that for both the Hardy and Hunnewell projects, it has always been the intention to generate electricity by installing solar arrays on the roof. As an example, it has been estimated that at Hunnewell, putting solar arrays on the roof would generate 40% of the electricity needed for the school. She reminded the Committee that at the previous meeting, Ms. Mirick sought opinions as to whether the interest was to design to the \$1.2 million placeholder budget for the arrays or to maximize roof coverage. The takeaway from the discussion was that the interest was in maximizing energy generation as long as it was reasonably within the placeholder budget. A recently updated estimate if they were to maximize coverage is about \$1.5 million. The PBC has asked that the Committee take action to direct them to stay within the \$1.2 million or to maximize coverage as they begin planning and procuring the arrays with the goal of the arrays being wrapped into debt exclusion for both projects in the fall.

Mr. Roberti asked if it would affect the rest of the project if the cost of the arrays went over the placeholder budget. Ms. Mirick explained that the PV budget has always been separate from the rest of the budget and that money will not be taken from other things to make up the difference if the arrays exceed \$1.2 million.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Chow entertained a motion that the School Committee reaffirms its commitment to the sustainable design of the Hunnewell and Hardy Elementary Schools and requests that photovoltaic roof arrays be sized to reasonably maximize the coverage on the roofs of the Hunnewell and Hardy Elementary Schools and requests the PV arrays be installed as part of the construction of these two new elementary school facilities.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

RETURN TO IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Ms. Chow explained that on June 15th, Governor Baker will lift the state of emergency order; therefore the expectation will be to return to in person meetings. The Select Board is looking into giving committees the option to explore continuing with a hybrid format. There would be particular restrictions on what it means to be able to participate remotely and certain criteria would have to be met. The Select Board is currently seeking feedback from town boards.

The Committee had questions about returning to in person meetings, particularly around the public or guests attending the meetings. Mr. Roberti asked if the public would still be allowed to attend remotely and, if not, would there be a limit to the number of people allowed to attend in person? Ms. Mirick added the Select Board could authorize hybrid meetings as long as a quorum meets in person. Ms. Eizenberg noted an interest in a hybrid model for its accessibility to the public and board members. She and Ms. Martin also noted there were potential bills at the State House that would extend the ability to meet remotely until September 1st. Ms. Chow stated she would make note of the questions that were raised and will pass them and the Committee's comments and feedback to the Select Board.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 5:08 pm, Ms. Chow entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Mirick
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

Implementation Guidelines for Policy JG
Declaration of Surplus - WHS Library Books