

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
June 15, 2021
Superintendent's Conference Room**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Those present included Chair Linda Chow, Vice Chair Melissa Martin, Secretary Catherine Mirick, members Leda Eizenberg and Jim Roberti; Superintendent David Lussier, Interim Assistant Superintendent Mike LaCava; Assistant Superintendent Cynthia Mahr; and Student Advisory representative Rachel White.

Ms. Chow announced that the meeting is being held in a hybrid format with all Committee members, Dr. Lussier, and Ms. Mahr attending in person and others attending remotely and that the meeting is being recorded by local media and broadcast live by Wellesley Media.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no speakers.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Chow stated the proposed legislation to extend the provisions allowing for remote meetings is making its way to the governor's desk but has not been voted on yet. It is possible the Committee will meet remotely next week.

She noted she will be sending around a composite of the Superintendent evaluations to Committee members.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Lussier stated the second vaccination clinic was held June 15th at the high school. He offered thanks to Palmed Pharmacy.

He noted that as of June 18th, the middle school will become a construction site. Anyone needing to conduct business with Central Office should reach out via phone or email, as there will be no in person opportunities with the public there for the summer.

The Administration had its second meeting with colleagues from the Chinese Language School. They discussed the possibility of hosting the AP Chinese exam next spring.

STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT

Ms. White stated she had nothing to report.

CONSENT AGENDA

Meeting Minutes – May 25th and June 2, 2021
Declaration of Surplus Performing Arts materials - Middle School

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

MOVED: Ms. Martin; SECONDED: Ms. Mirick;

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CINDY MAHR'S AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

Margaret Driscoll, Executive Director of MASBO, and Todd DeLuca, President and CEO of Boston Business Technology joined the Committee

Ms. Driscoll stated that at its 55th Annual Institute conference held virtually last week, Ms. Mahr was announced as this year's winner of the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials' (MASBO) President's Award. She noted the President's Award recognizes an individual for contributing to the growth and improvement of the profession and contributions to his or her school district, community, and the Association. It is sponsored by Boston Business Technology and RISO, Inc., and includes a \$1,000 contribution to the Wellesley Public Schools in honor of Ms. Mahr. Ms. Mahr was recognized for her seven years of service on the MASBO Board, including as President in FY20, providing significant input on the current strategic plan, as well as organizing and facilitating a wide variety of professional development events as well as serving on and leading many Board committees. Mr. DeLuca added he was happy to support this award and congratulated Ms. Mahr.

Ms. Driscoll added her thanks to Ms. Mahr noting she was a tremendous leader in her field and a credit to her profession.

WHS ASSESSMENTS REPORT

Dr. Jamie Chisum, WHS principal, Dana Plunkett, WHS Head of Guidance, and Dr. Anne Beauchamp, PreK-12 Coordinator for Curriculum, Assessment & Accountability joined the Committee remotely.

Dr. Chisum began by explaining the number one goal at Wellesley High School is excellent teaching and that the hope is that data from the results of student assessments will help understand how to do that better. He underscored the importance of these test scores in regards to equity in that they will highlight where there are spots they need to improve both access and achievement.

Dr. Beauchamp presented data from the class of 2020, noting that most of the data therefore reflects assessments pre-COVID. Out of approximately 380 students, only 28 did not take either the SAT or ACT in their junior year (2018-19). Roughly half the number of students took the SAT this year compared to last year due to COVID. This is exactly comparable to data at the state level. She stated the class of 2020 scored very well on these assessments, outperforming state and national peers. There were 432 individual AP test takers in the 2019-20 year, which indicates an increasing trend. Of the tests taken, 91% scored 3 or higher.

Ms. Plunkett discussed post-secondary admissions and changes brought about by the pandemic. She stated an increasing number of colleges are becoming test optional, which places admissions emphasis on a student's transcript. She noted that last year approximately 23% of applicants did not submit scores and this year nearly 56% did not. While there is no evidence making tests optional has impacted the admissions process, it has led to a more diverse applicant pool and therefore a more diverse incoming class. It has also meant large applicant pools leading to decreased acceptance rates. She added AP testing is not usually taken into account in the admissions process, rather it is used to give credits or place out of classes. Her advice for the class of 2022 was to invest their time and energy in areas they are interested in, to focus on the full high school experience, and to focus on their grades, level of rigor, and being appropriately challenged.

After a brief discussion, the Committee thanked Dr. Chisum, Ms. Plunkett, and Dr. Beauchamp for their presentation.

FACILITY PROJECTS

Jeff D'Amico of Compass, Kristen Olsen, Alex Pitkin, and Michael Dowhan of SMMA, Joe Pollock and Ryan Lynch of Shawmut Design and Construction, and Dick Elliot, WPS Facilities Management Project Manager joined the Committee.

HUNNEWELL 50% CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

Ms. Mirick stated SMMA requires the Committee to sign off on 50% construction documents for the Hunnewell project. Ms. Olsen clarified that updates presented at this meeting reflect changes and updates as the project approaches 90% planning and they do not affect the 50% documents requiring signing.

Mr. Pitkin discussed the most recent topic of conversation with the PBC regarding fencing after they were asked to review the property line with the library. He noted the fencing will match the current fencing around Cameron Street and will go along the edge of the woods down to the crosswalk. There have been ongoing detail review meetings with FMD and they will be working with W.T. Rich on exterior material mockups. The team is reviewing materials with PBC and FMD and they are nearing color and finish selection.

Ms. Mirick stated the vote to accept the 50% construction documents will take place at the next School Committee meeting June 22nd.

RUTH S. WALTER GARDEN AT HUNNEWELL

Mr. Dowhan showed the Committee renderings of possible designs for the Ruth S. Walter Garden at Hunnewell. He stated the existing garden is a Japanese style garden. He noted that earlier discussions revolved around whether the existing garden could be lifted and moved to the new space; however it was determined the plant material is not likely a candidate for transplant. Material brought over from the existing space to the new space includes the dedication stone with plaque and memorial bench. He explained the current proposed renderings are to create a placeholder for the cost estimate that would support anything that would come into the design in the future. After being shown multiple renderings, it was the consensus of the Committee to endorse an intermediary design until Mr. Dowhan is able to get more input from the Walter family.

Ms. Chow left the meeting at 8:02.

HARDY SCOPE AND BUDGET

Mr. D'Amico noted the Hardy project is in the schematic design phase, currently at 30% of design. He added they are currently receiving public input via abutters and community meetings. As part of the MSBA process, it is necessary to set the budget at this 30% stage with a July 7th submission date. He stated the core elements of the MSBA submission include a review of the floor plans, site plan, the exterior, and total project budget, essentially locking in the size of building. Minor changes will still be acceptable.

Mr. Pitkin stated there have not been many changes since the last time they presented. He noted they took from the abutters meeting the notion that they should be reducing the impact to Hardy Road with the intake and egress of cars. He added there will be more information to come with the traffic analysis report coming out soon. He pointed out one change to the floor

plan in moving the quiet dining from outside to inside. There have been no changes on the second floor's plan.

Mr. D'Amico then discussed the budget. He stated it is important in this stage to ensure the right amount of scope knowing details can follow. This includes the right amount of hardscape and softscape as well as overall size. The budget needs to contain the right amount of contingencies to hold through the final bidding two years from now accounting for appropriate inflation. Ultimately a total number of \$70,000,000 will be proposed to be appropriated. He stated they are still making value engineering decisions. For example, they are looking to add a driveway from Route 9, which may necessitate a deceleration lane per Massachusetts DOT. That estimated figure is in the overall number. The proposed budget is the not to exceed number that the PBC is moving forward to the Committee at this meeting, to the Select Board the following week, and to Town Meeting in the fall. Of note, the overall total project budget is \$72,500,000, which includes the previously funded \$2,500,000 million. MSBA will review the totality of the submission to determine their reimbursement number. That number will be known long before the fall Town Meeting.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to endorse the PBC recommendation from June 10th for a proposed approximately 80,039 GSF building, Shawmut Construction Schedule with Occupancy in August 2024 and a not to exceed budget of \$70,000,000 to form the basis of the Hardy Elementary School Project Submission to the MSBA.

MOVED: Mr. Roberti; SECONDED: Ms. Mirick;
MOTION CARRIED 4-0

Ms. Chow returned to the meeting at 8:26.

AUTHORIZATION TO SIGN LOCAL APPROVALS AND ACTIONS LETTER

Ms. Martin explained that until funding is approved, every time there is a submission to MSBA, the Committee is required to outline all meetings in which the project was discussed, including School Committee, PBC, and Select Board with an outline of what was discussed. Currently, this document is still in draft form. We will plan to take a vote authorizing signature at the next meeting.

UPDATED SBC ROSTER

Ms. Martin noted that there has been a reorganization of town boards and the School Building Committee (SBC) roster needs to be updated. Former Committee member Sharon Gray was previously the School Committee representative to the SBC. Ms. Martin entertained a motion to update the membership of the School Building Committee by replacing Sharon Gray with Catherine Mirick and by updating titles where necessary of School Building Committee members as of July 1, 2021.

MOVED: Mr. Roberti; SECONDED: Ms. Eizenberg;
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ANNUAL FOOD SERVICE REPORT

Matt Delaney, Food Services Director, joined the Committee.

Ms. Mahr began by explaining that they are presenting a very different report than in years past, as legislation has allowed districts to operate very differently this year.

Mr. Delaney stated that whenever possible, Whitsons uses locally sourced, wholesome, organic food. Due to pandemic constraints, they have been serving more prepackaged meals this year. He noted the District has been operating under the Seamless Summer Option, a national school lunch and breakfast program that enables districts to provide meals at no cost for the entire district regardless of income for the entire school year. This year, with only half of the students in buildings two days a week, meal counts were very low, though they built up over time, more so at the elementary level than at the middle school or high school. Items not covered in this program include a la carte drinks, bottled drinks, individual milks, snacks, second meals, and other a la carte items. This same program will continue through the entire 2021-2022 school year.

Ms. Mahr stated that in looking at data through March of this year compared with data through March of last year, the District served three times as many meals last year as this year. With the increased reimbursement rate, the District's reimbursement doubled this year; however revenue was lost due to lack of a la carte sales. She added that adult meals, catering, and vending also lost significant revenue. As the District began the year with a healthy fund balance and received a school nutrition grant, she believes if participation increases and they are allowed to serve a la carte items, there will be a healthy balance next year.

Mr. Delaney stated the middle school kitchen will be knocked down after school is out. He added he is very excited and appreciative of the town listening to the District's needs over the years. The middle school project should be on target to provide more, better, and faster meals and will provide a great work environment for team members. He expects a full return of full meal service at all schools next year.

After a brief discussion, the Committee thanked Mr. Delaney for his hard work and his presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 8:55 pm, Ms. Chow entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOVED: Ms. Martin; SECONDED: Ms. Mirick.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Mirick
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

Surplus Performing Arts Materials 6.15.21
President's Award 2021
WHS Assessment 2021 SC Presentation
Dedication Garden rendering 2021-06-08
Dedication Garden rendering 2021-06-14
Hunnewell 50% Construction Documents approval letter
Food Services Presentation 2021
Draft Local Actions and Approvals Letter