

**Wellesley Public Schools  
School Committee Meeting  
June 22, 2020  
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM. Those present included Chair Melissa Martin, Vice Chair Linda Chow, Secretary Sharon Gray, members Jim Roberti and Catherine Mirick; and Superintendent David Lussier.

Ms. Martin announced that since the meeting was unable to be broadcast live by Wellesley Media this evening, in compliance with the legislation allowing for remote public meetings, it is being recorded and will be posted on Wellesley Media for public viewing after the meeting is completed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** There were no callers.

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING PREPARATION**

Ms. Martin indicated the purpose of the meeting is to address any issues or questions relative to Town Meeting motions that are being presented this evening. It was noted that there was one question that was sent to the Committee prior to Town Meeting relative to Special Education funding. Dr. Lussier mentioned one recurring topic over the past week is a question on School Resource Officers (SROs) funding, which is not within the Schools' budget; it is in the Police Department's budget. The group discussed the role of SROs in the Wellesley Public Schools and the relationship between the Schools and the Police Department.

Dr. Lussier discussed the extensive conversation with high school students, current and alums, WPS administrators and representatives of the Police Department that occurred on June 18<sup>th</sup> regarding racism and diversity. Topics included the WPS curriculum and how it addresses racism, professional development on race and diversity, and student-police relationships. This is one in a series of events promoted by the Wake Up Wellesley organization.

The Committee discussed comments being made by a Town Meeting member regarding teachers expressing support or personal opinions on issues that may be controversial. Dr. Lussier explained that WPS faculty has the right to engage personally on issues, however, they may not do so through their school email accounts or during school hours. Dr. Lussier has reached out to the Wellesley Education Association to clarify this and noted that teachers' personal opinions are not those of the School Department or School Committee.

Dr. Lussier also discussed the flexibility of the Superintendent to engage in political discourse in Town and that it is typically limited only to those issues under the Schools' purview. He referenced the Citizens' Petition on Indigenous People Day that is being presented to Town Meeting and is before the Selectmen. He explained the authority to change this holiday is outside of the Schools' purview, and it is Town Counsel's opinion that the Superintendent should not opine on this topic. Ms. Martin agreed with Dr. Lussier's comments noting the Citizen's Petition is directed to Town Meeting, as the Town's legislative body to provide an advisory opinion to the Board of Selectmen. She expects that School Committee may take this up and similar issues when it is

appropriate to do so. Since the WPS calendar is under the Committee's purview, the School Committee would likely engage on this topic as it relates to the school calendar and the implications of this on student school days.

Mr. Roberti expressed concern with comments made by a Town Meeting member who feels that students are being manipulated by adults in the school system to send out multiple emails to Town Meeting members. Other Town Meeting members feel that it is great seeing students involved and engaged on these important topics. Dr. Lussier indicated he is pleased to see the level of organization and involvement that WPS students have on important issues. Teachers present facts from primary sources and students are asked to arrive at their own conclusions. Dr. Lussier also reminded the Committee that one element of the Profile of a Graduate is for students to challenge inequities and use their voices.

Other questions that have come up include how costs relating to COVID-19 expenses will be handled.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** There were no callers.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At approximately 6:55 pm, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to adjourn to attend Annual Town Meeting.

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

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gray  
Secretary

**Documents and Exhibits Used:**

None