

February 28, 2018

A meeting of the Wareham School Committee was held on Wednesday, February 28, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wareham Middle School Auditorium. Members present were Geoff Swett, Mary Morgan, Joyce Bacchiocchi, Laurie Spear, Judy Caporiccio, and student representative Jamie Read as well as Superintendent Kimberly Shaver-Hood and recording secretary Michelle Ruiz.

Chair Caporiccio called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. She announced that the meeting was being recorded and streamed live by WCTV and an audio recording by Mrs. Ruiz. She then welcomed Selectmen Patrick Tropeano, Town Administrator Derek Sullivan, members of the Finance Committee Bernie Pigeon and Pat Rumney, and Town Moderator Claire Smith.

Public Comment was moved to agenda item Discussion on FY19 Budget Reductions.

GOOD NEWS

Mrs. Bacchiocchi attended the Best Buddies Party and thanked the Salerno family for sponsoring the event.

Mr. Swett congratulated the audience members on taking an active role in their town.

Minutes of the Meeting

Mr. Swett moved to approve the minutes of February 7, 2018, seconded by Mrs. Morgan.

VOTE: yea - 5; nay - 0; abstain - 0

CTE Brain Injury Presentation by South Coast Hospitals - Mr. Swett introduced Joe Scott, the presenter from South Coast Hospitals.

Mr. Scott stated that we all have to take an active role in what is a concussion, following the return to play guidelines, and getting students back into the classroom after a concussion. Two points:

- 1) Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) - a study of eight young teenage victims was done and CTE was only identifiable after death from a MRI or CAT Scan. It showed evidence of a protein developed in the brain of young student athletes who had a concussion(s) at one time. We need to be aware of this new information, but nothing is conclusive. Not everybody will get CTE because of a concussion. Skills related to contact sports are very important and it is suggested for kids to hold off on contact sports until older when their brain is more developed to limit exposure of these injuries.
- 2) The new blood test can diagnose concussions is not true. The blood test detects bleeding in the brain and how to best treat the injury.

The Committee thanked Mr. Scott for coming and making the presentation.

Review of Student Discipline

Mrs. Chandler, Principal Decas School, stated that all disciplinary incidents are teachable experiences. There were 214 incidents last year and 186 incidents this year to date. The School-wide Intervention and Supports (SWIS) program monitors discipline, i.e. where it

happens, the number of days in school, by month, by location of referrals and by grade level. Principal Chandler then reviewed how we respond to incidents with prevention, intervention and consequential and the positive Safety Mid-Year Survey Results from Staff, Parents, and Students.

In response to members' questions, Mrs. Chandler will provide data by age as it relates to the cut off age recently changed and younger children entering Kindergarten. As to any children described as incorrigible, Mrs. Chandler stated the school is able to work with every child to meet his/her needs.

Mrs. Seamans, Principal, and Mrs. Murphy, Assistant Principal, Minot reported that their discipline incidents have gone down in every category in the same period of time as last year except for verbal threats. Mrs. Seamans reviewed the steps implemented at the school and ways the administration features positive behavior with rewards.

In response to members' questions about a student's behavior being chronic and is this the wrong school for that student, children having more incidents than others are flagged for the student support council, team meetings and/or provide other supports for those children. We don't let a student's behavior become chronic with the steps we have in place.

In response to students still in school after an assault of a staff member, Dr. Shaver-Hood stated that some students with behavior challenges have other issues going on in and out of school and it is the educators' job to look into this for a short-term or long-term placement. A collaboration with behavior support in place helps a student be successful.

Dr. Steedman, Principal Middle School, reported a decline in the total discipline referrals (Sept-March) this year to last year. We have great kids in the district who sometimes make poor choices. The decline in incidents is due to staff supporting the students and our initiatives to increase pro-social behavior including two pilot programs, the Academic Support Class and Morning Mentors.

In response to members' questions, the initial surveys done in October were positive and another survey will be done soon. Are the 25% or 5 students, not making progress in discipline having a negative impact on the school, Principal Steedman is always optimistic. Dr. Shaver-Hood stated that it is the students' right to attend classes in an environment where they can learn. It is our job to come up with a solution to channel students' behaviors not to interfere with the rights of others.

Scott Palladino, Principal WHS, presented two types of discipline incidents, attendance and disruptive. Each has gone down for the last two years. There are discipline improvements with the deans and other interventions and support staff in place.

Discussion of FY19 Budget Reductions

Chair Caporiccio announced there would be public comment and questions after the presentation.

Michael MacMillan, Business Manager, made the following presentation:

- Budget priorities
- Budget History FY19
- The Size of the Budget Gap – level service budget \$30,913,679; requested budget \$29,413,679; town proposed budget \$28,477,537 for a total difference of \$2.4 million
- Funding – Revenue streams go to general town departments and to schools. There is a net reduction in educational state funding due to school choice and charter schools and an increase in employee benefits of 5%. We also have less grants and available circuit breaker funds.
- Developing a level service budget
- Student Enrollment has gone down 414 fewer since 2014 and we have had school closings since 2015.
- Staffing Current and Historical – Reduction
- Areas of Focus – administration/staff; facilities; transportation; teachers
- Proposals for Reducing our Budget –
 - 1) reduction of teaching and non-teaching staff
 - 2) restructuring of school personnel
 - 3) charging for transportation
 - 4) closing a building
- Proposed changes to school leadership – cut 3 Assistant Principals at Minot and 1 at Decas and 1 at Middle; add deans and department chairs
- Closing a Building – Close Minot Forest with a potential building project combining Minot and Decas at one site. We can realize some financial benefits now but this is not easy. We can do this for the next couple of years to meet budget numbers. Savings of \$1,150,000
- Grade Configuration
 - Decas just under 800 K-3 with portable classrooms for grade 3
 - Middle 767 students in Gr.4-7
 - High 667 students in Gr.8-12
 - PASS Program 45 students in Gr. 9-12
 - Plan for Preschool at WHS not part of general enrollment
- Alternative Budget Reduction Proposals Rejected – the proposed options best meet the priorities
- Summary Impact of Reductions on Staffing – 67 since 2011; 33 FTE for FY19
- Provisional School Budget - \$28,778,679 around \$300,000 higher than Town Administrator's school budget
- Next steps are to work with the Town Administrator and come back on March 14th for a vote on the FY19 budget.

Dr. Shaver-Hood reviewed the class sizes 20 to 24 Decas; 25 to 27 Middle; need to wait for scheduling at the High School.

Chair Caporiccio opened the meeting for public comment and questions. She asked the audience members to use the microphone and identify themselves prior to speaking.

The following concerns were expressed by members of the community, parents and staff. The Committee members, Superintendent, Business Manager, Town Administrator, and a member of the Board of Selectmen were available to answer questions.

- Upcoming Kindergarten projected at 200 with portables at Decas School.
- Grade 4 students being bussed with high school students is a concern and looking at various bussing configurations. Grade 4 students to Middle School and ride the bus with other elementary students starting at the elementary time and a separate wing for grade 4 & 5, recess time in the various fields around the school, no playground available.
- Regarding discipline the district does have a long term program to track students through high school.
- Reduction of staff 19% to reduction of students 27%.
- Can we negotiate back the raise for next year? Even with the increase our teachers are still underpaid; not in the best interest of the town.
- Unfair to parents, kids, and staff with these budget cuts. What kind of education are they going to have with 33 staff cuts? Class sizes and services will be maintained.
- My child is losing out because of discipline. How much is enough? Will be looking into school choice. If we close Minot now, you won't see a new school.
- Have been through changes in closing schools and merging of grade configuration and now another upheaval in our town. This is not the answer but is chasing more parents out of Wareham. Begging the Town Administrator to come up with a different way of handling this and not cut into the school budget.
- Costing Wareham \$3 million for choice and charter less net revenue. If we bring the \$3.1 million budget to town meeting, the Finance Committee has the right to amend that number. The other alternative is not close Minot which will result in laying off more teachers.
- Did not hear anything about bullying under the discipline report. If we close Minot now, will not get the vote for a new school.
- The system is at state minimum and all we can do is cut. We need money to improve our system, so go out and vote.
- Concern with new housing project and if this was in the enrollment projections. Projections were made on increased enrollment. Need to ask parents who have taken kids out, why? Have heard from parents they are moving out because of discipline issues.
- Will some students have free transportation? Yes, student in K-6 outside 2 miles and free/reduced lunch students.
- The teaching schedule for Deans is half time and Department Chairs is less with evaluation duties.
- In regard to the town having a 5-year plan, this financial situation was predicted twenty years ago with proposition 2 ½. 66% of the town's revenue is given to the schools. We need new revenue streams and need to have people vote for an override. We do have an educational strategic plan. The physical plan is town meeting voting for a new school with 75% state reimbursement. The town wants Decas School space for a new tax revenue.
- How are parents going to have confidence in the school system with our leaders looking to get out.

- Son has had a great experience. We have the best teachers and principal and school committee because they work with what they have.
- Has seen too many schools closed and if Minot closes, not going to get funding. Does not want 4th graders going to middle school and will look into charter school.
- Home schooling child because of problems heard about, including bullying. The budget is the problem and what is wrong with this town to vote this down.
- Disappointed with override not passing. Is there any way to get money elsewhere instead of cutting the budget. Grants have seen reductions and the Town Administrator is seeking other sources, but we need to increase the tax rate.
- Current student capacity K-4 is close to capacity of new building but state formula gives the proposed new school capacity to grow.
- Staff cuts are coming in every area and some through retirements. Positions will be lost but we will continue to meet IEP's and contractual obligations for teacher prep.
- Why not increase business taxes. Because the levy increase can only increase 2½% - 80% residential, 20% commercial. We need help to get affordable housing for mobile homes bill through.
- Urged audience to go to town meeting to listen and learn.
- Keep in consideration when moving the Preschool program you are dealing with 3, 4, and 5 year olds and plumbing is a big issue and costs a lot of money.
- Noted that the town budget has gone up 16% and the school budget has gone up 6% in same time period.
- Temporary portables are still at Decas over 24 years ago. How many staff were reduced at the middle and high school level? Cuts were reviewed district wide. This is a band aid to resolve this year's budget problem is how this is received. We need more information to vote.

(Student rep Jamie Read left the meeting at 9:40 p.m.)

Procedurally, Chair Caporiccio asked for a motion to go beyond 10:00 p.m. Mr. Swett moved to go beyond 10:00 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Bacchiocchi.

VOTE: yea - 4; nay - 1 (Mrs. Morgan); abstain - 0

- The number of discipline incidents are affecting his daughter with disruption and teachers leaving.
- The town's retirement fund is legally established.
- The hearing for the apartment complex had to be held under 40B law or else it would be an automatic approval.
- If close Minot and the new school does not happen what will be next? Class sizes acceptable if no behavior problems in classroom. Not enough is being done with behavior students and believes the main reason parents are pulling their children out is for discipline.
- What is being done to bring our kids back to Wareham? We are sacrificing the many for the few and need to significantly improve discipline and take it seriously. Every year parents sign an agreement for rules; must make parents accountable for what children do in school. Why are we not enforcing the handbook?

- Is discipline costing us more money than it should? Yes, some students are sent out of district and it takes staff and resources to deal with issues. Some students come to school with trauma issues and it takes both resources and time.
- Understand parents concerns of 4th graders and discipline is one of the reasons why parents leave our district. PTA and School Councils make parents part of the school culture. It's a social media frenzy instead of working within the district. Email your School Committee members.
- Preschool enrollment fluctuates from 70 to 100 as students come into the program by age level, peers models and students with special needs. We can team with high school students for a child development class. We are aware of issues which need to be addressed i.e., plumbing, play area, appropriate size furniture. Looking at Middle school also. The community needs to come together and thank teachers when you see them.
- We need to bring our community back to the Wareham Public Schools.

Chair Caporiccio closed the public comments and thanked all participants.

Superintendent's Report

Approval of Bills and Payroll Warrants

Mr. Swett moved approval of the warrants as stated in the Superintendent's Newsletter seconded by Mrs. Bacchiocchi.

Payroll Week Ending Feb 10, 2018 \$145,823.11

Payroll Week Ending Feb 17, 2018 \$850,953.24

Bill Warrant 2/22/18 \$3,034.79

Bill Warrant 3/1/18 \$3,034.79

Bill Warrant 3/1/18 \$285,354.12

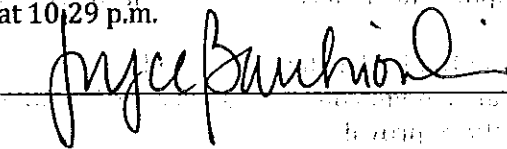
Bill Warrant 3/8/18 \$3,034.79

VOTE: yea - 5; nay - 0; abstain - 0

Mr. Swett moved to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Morgan.

VOTE: yea - 5; nay - 0; abstain - 0

The meeting adjourned at 10:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: 

List of documents:

Correspondence: Superintendent's Newsletter, Personnel List, Notice of Vacancies

Minutes of the Meeting February 7, 2018

Articles: "Repeated Head Hits, Not Just Concussions, May Lead to a Type of Chronic Brain Damage" and "Concussions Can be detected with New Blood Test Approved by F.D.A."

Discipline Data Review, February 2018

WPS FY19 Budget Presentation February 28, 2018

APR 09 2018