

School Committee Meeting
August 20, 2020

A meeting of the Wareham School Committee was held on Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 320 at the Multi-Service Center.

Roll Call/Call to Order:

Present from School Committee: Joyce Bacchiocchi, Michael Flaherty, Kevin Brogioli, Mary Morgan, and Apryl Rossi. Also in attendance, Dr. Kimberly Shaver-Hood, Superintendent, Dr. Andrea Schwamb, Assistant Superintendent, and Jamie Wiksten, Recording Secretary.

Chair Bacchiocchi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and lead us in the pledge of allegiance. Chair Bacchiocchi announced the meeting was recorded and broadcasted by WCTV.

Public Participation:

Chair Bacchiocchi announced that the School Committee is in receipt of many letters, requested to be read, but cannot be read if the subject matter is on current negotiations, nor can anyone speak on current negotiations per our school counsel.

Mr. Flaherty believes the public is allowed to speak, without a response from the school committee members.

Ms. Morgan suggested we revisit Public Participation later in the meeting. Chair Bacchiocchi agreed, and explained that she is acting on the advice of school counsel.

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of minutes of June 18, 2020:

Mr. Flaherty moved to approve the minutes of June 18, 2020, seconded by Ms. Rossi. With no further discussion:

4 - yea

0 - nay

1 - abstain (Mr. Brogioli abstained, as he was not a member of the School Committee during the June 18, 2020 meeting)

VOTE: 4-0-1

Approval of the Minutes of July 2, 2020:

Ms. Rossi made a motion to approve the minutes of July 2, 2020, seconded by Mary Morgan

Mr. Flaherty stated the July 2, 2020 meeting was a remote meeting, which requires roll call votes. He asked Ms. Wiksten to add the roll call to the meeting notes.

Ms. Rossi - rescinded her motion, agreed by Mary Morgan

Mr. Flaherty motioned to table the minutes of July 2, 2020 until the September 3 meeting, seconded by Ms. Rossi.

With no further discussion, all those in favor:

5 - yea

0- nay

0- abstain

VOTE: 5-0-0

Minutes of July 15, 2020

Mr. Flaherty motioned to approve the minutes of July 15, 2020, seconded by Ms. Rossi.

With no further discussion, all those in favor:

5 - yea

0- nay

0- abstain

VOTE: 5-0-0

Acceptance of Gifts:

Dr. Shaver-Hood asked the committee to accept the gift of \$2.00 from AT&T Your Cause Giving Campaign for Wareham High School.

Mr. Rossi moved to approve the gift, seconded by Mr. Flaherty.

With no further discussion, all those in favor:

5 - yea

0- nay

0 - abstain

VOTE: 5-0-0

Overview of the Reopening of Wareham Public Schools, Dr. Kimberly Shaver-Hood

Dr. Shaver-Hood informed the committee that parents were asked to choose hybrid or full remote learning. Currently the results are 1292 hybrid students, and 551 students who have chosen to be remote this year.

Decas – Hybrid: 401, Remote 146, Attempting Notification 40

Minot – Hybrid: 182, Remote 50, Attempting Notification 22

WMS – Hybrid: 326, Remote 177, Attempting Notification 23

WHS – Hybrid: 383, Remote 178, Attempting Notification 25

Sports Season:

Modified Season

Fall Season starting on September 18, 2020

Schools choosing to begin practice must:

1. Complete the Sport Compliance Form
2. Encouraged to create fall season schedule within league/region

3. No Post season tournaments for the falls season

Ms. Morgan asked if some families are not comfortable with either choice. Dr. Shaver-Hood responded that we have already received 40 applications for home school at this time, which is very high at this time of year.

Ms. Morgan asked what the school will do if a child does not want to do either choice presented. Dr. Shaver-Hood said that the principals and counselors would reach out and see what we could do to help keep students connected. That's our job, and that's our goal.

Ms. Rossi stated that hybrid number is higher than we anticipated, so how does this effect the hybrid social distancing in each building?

Dr. Shaver-Hood responded that by splitting the hybrid students into two cohorts, one cohort will attend school Monday/Tuesday, and one cohort will attend Thursday/Friday so that will help balance these numbers.

Dr. Shaver-Hood announced that the State Public Health Officials announced yesterday that all children who attend public school must have the influenza vaccination. Students must have the flu shot by December 31, 2020. Medical and religious exemptions are allowed. This applies to all students enrolled in the hybrid and remote model.

Dr. Shaver-Hood confirmed that as we prepare to open our schools, we would be looking to hire seasonal custodians and CNA's one per school building.

Dr. Shaver-Hood informed the committee that a tremendous amount of work put into developing templates so that everything is common between the schools. She informed the committee that the district is creating a website and we thought it would be helpful to show this to you at the next meeting, so the school committee will see what the parents can see from home.

Ms. Rossi asked if this website could be linked to PowerSchool. Dr. Schwamb responded that it could not; as PowerSchool already has a competing learning management system, so it has to be kept separate.

Dr. Shaver-Hood informed the school committee that the school buildings are getting the lists ready for the Transportation Department and we have transportation here tonight to give an update on where we are.

Mr. Brogioli asked if a school has decided to go fully remote, is the state allowing athletics to be played if the students are not participating at school. Dr. Shaver-Hood responded that it is her understanding that the answer is no.

Ms. Rossi asked about other activities and if there are regulations for drama or extracurricular activities.

Dr. Shaver-Hood responded that we are working on this, because we know this is very important to students and we need to work out the remote component, and it is still in progress.

Chair Bacchiocchi asked about communication with families, and will the new school year be communicated to parents and families.

Dr. Shaver-Hood shared that Decas had a parent forum via zoom and we are hoping other schools will do this. Emails are going out to parents, and information is rolling out on a regular basis.

Transportation Report, Jamie Andrews Transportation and Facilities Manager

(Mr. Andrews distributed an image of what a bus will look like under DESE guidelines).

Mr. Andrews began showing the committee the figure of what a school bus looks at with the capacity with 25 students. Siblings can sit together, with a max of 25 students, and the seat behind the bus driver is to remain empty, to protect the bus driver.

As of today (8/20/2020):

1,986 students are eligible to ride the Bus in Grades K-13

758 applications were received, which roughly leaves 1,228 students who did not fill out a transportation application.

Mr. Andrews explained that if a parent did not turn in an application, transportation assumes they are not using bus transportation and the bus company is not planning to route these students on a bus.

Mr. Flaherty asked what the numbers were last year, and Mr. Andrews responded the numbers were higher than the number presented for this year.

Mr. Andrews explained that with the numbers we have for this year, we have roughly 16 large buses (give or take), but that could change with remote students.

He reminded the committee those students who live one mile or under from school, have to provide their own ride to school.

Mr. Andrews continued that one of the difficult topics in his office is *variances*; which is any location that is not your home. He confirmed that the transportation department busses home-to-school, and school-to-home. A student can fill out a variance, allowing us to bring a child to a daycare or another home when a parent works. The biggest question we have received is "can we fill out a variance?" Mr. Andrews is encouraging people to fill out the variance, but it does not guarantee that it will be granted due to capacity, and our first responsibility is to get a child to and from school. In years prior, variances were granted if room allowed for it on a bus. Mr. Andrews wanted families to fill out the variance, first come first serve, and his department will collect the variance in order as we receive them.

Ms. Rossi confirmed that 16 buses would cover the 758 applications received. She

asked how many buses we have in the fleet now.

Mr. Andrews responded that including Special Ed Transportation, we have around 30 buses.

Ms. Rossi asked if parents are able to fill out variances at this time, there could be a dedicated bus for the Girls and Boys Club.

Mr. Andrews responded that would be something he would review.

Dr. Shaver-Hood reminded the committee that our position is that we are not granting variances. If a parent needs to take a child from a daycare, right now we are saying if we are picking up/dropping off a child from a different location other than home is fine. However, we cannot pick up a child from one address (home) and then drop the child off at a different location/different bus; we are not able to do that.

Mr. Flaherty asked for clarification on the variance, with the information provided by Mr. Andrews. Mr. Andrews responded that a variance has always been about availability. Mr. Flaherty stated the information presented by Mr. Andrews is confusing, as he believed the variance was about safety and not mixing cohorts. Mr. Flaherty stated that Mr. Andrews has presented mixed signals and this needs to be clarified.

Dr. Shaver-Hood confirmed that there is no variance for the school year because of safety concerns, and we cannot bus everyone to and from school with movement of students, allowing for use of different buses. Therefore, we are not accepting variances this year.

Dr. Shaver-Hood stated the use of bus stops need to be the same in the morning and in the afternoon. Mr. Flaherty agreed with Dr. Shaver-Hood that is not a variance.

Mr. Flaherty expressed his concerns regarding mixed messages to families by offering variance forms to be filled out.

Mr. Brogioli asked Mr. Andrews to confirm that we can accommodate the amount of students registered to use buses and follow DESE guidelines. Mr. Andrews confirmed this to be correct.

Chair Bacchiocchi mentioned that the school committee was told that buses are full. Now that we have students choosing remote, is this still true?

Mr. Andrews is still receiving numbers from the schools. If a student has opted for remote, we are removing the child from the bus, and have opened up some room on some of the buses. We are going to say the buses are full until we have the numbers finalized.

Ms. Rossi asked if there is a date for transportation applications, and can parents still submit transportation forms, considering we still have half a fleet available?

Mr. Andrews responded that he is still receiving applications.

Ms. Rossi asked if there can be a final date for the transportation applications, and Mr. Andrews responded that if there is a deadline, he would shut off the application and complete his numbers.

Dr. Shaver-Hood confirmed to Ms. Rossi that we would have a deadline and make it public.

Memorandum of Understanding, Unit A Contract - VOTE

Mr. Brogioli had to recuse himself from the vote per guidance of MASS Ethics Commission due to his relationship with two teachers in the District. He submitted a disclosure of Conflict of Interest Form to Ms. Wiksten.

(Mr. Brogioli excused himself from the meeting)

Dr. Shaver-Hood reviewed the changes listed in the Memorandum:

- Length of workday: there are three workdays without students; prior to the memorandum, there were four.
- If after making reasonable efforts, it is not feasible to provide daily blocks, the Committee may schedule a teacher for multiple blocks on the same day. - Removed
- Director of Curriculum changed to Assistant Superintendent
- Salaries: number of days 184 days changed to 183.
- Duration changed to September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021
- November 2019 changed to November 2020
- Salary grid shall increase with the 16th paycheck by 1%.

Salary: Dr. Shaver-hood explained what this means is during this school year, there will be a freeze of pay until the 16th week of payroll, and at that time, Unit A will receive a 1% increase. When we negotiate again, everyone will move to the correct step, without losing a step.

Dr. Shaver-Hood asked for an approval of the Memorandum.

Mr. Flaherty moved to approve the memorandum, seconded by Ms. Morgan
Chair Bacchiocchi asked if there was any further discussion.
All those in favor:

4 - yea
0 - nay
0 - abstain

VOTE: 4- 0- 0

Mr. Flaherty thanked everyone for his or her time and hard work on this MOU.

Report of the Superintendent:

The Superintendent asked the committee to approve the Payroll and Bill Warrants as listed in the Superintendent's Newsletter.

(Mr. Brogioli returned to the meeting)

Mr. Flaherty moved to approve the Bill and Payroll Warrants, seconded by Ms. Rossi.
All those in favor:

5 – yea
0 – nay
0 – abstain

VOTE: 5-0-0

Public Participation:

Chair Bacchiocchi announced that she will allow those who are present to speak, but cautioned those present that the School Committee has been advised by legal counsel not to participate in conversations that are an item in negotiations.

Deanna Semple, president of WEA:

Ms. Semple announced she was here tonight in support of paraprofessionals, Unit C members of our association. We were in crisis mode this spring. The hard work of the paras should be recognized and they are the backbone of the school. They work the closest with the students.

Professional Development has been planned and looks like there are great things planned and offered, and para's could really benefit from this training, such as social and emotional training. Teachers need to learn these strategies and I would like to see para's learn these strategies as well.

Marjory Rakoski, Paraprofessional at Wareham High School:

Ms. Rakoski informed the school committee that she just completed her second year as a Para and she does this job for the kids. She continued stating that she started in Special Ed, ISS, and even took over for a teacher in their leave of absence. If you do not train us, or show us, and god forbid something happens we should not have to wait for teachers to show us what they learned in training. I am willing to help a child emotionally. I have a connection with the children, and I will get my training one-way or the other. You have to think of the whole picture. Someone is going to have to train us.

Jamie Pelletier, Paraprofessional at Wareham High School: Ms. Pelletier stated that this is her 6th year. In her job, nothing about this situation is easy, because of the unknown. Fellow colleagues and myself have been preparing months leading up to the start of school. I am not sure if the committee realizes what our jobs are. We support our students and the teachers in the same way. We hold them accountable. It is a team effort, and paras should be included in the training. We are looking to know what we can and cannot do during the pandemic, what the plan is and support all involved the best way. We should be able to offer insight. We are experienced professionals and should be built into the design of the 2020-2021 school year. By definition, "Para" means to be alongside. To leave paras out of this training will be detrimental to our students.

Sarah Green, Special Education Teacher:

Ms. Greene addressed the committee and spoke on the value of paraprofessionals. The paras are professionals; they provide direct instruction and have a roll in meeting student goals. Paras attended daily zoom meetings last spring. We regularly collaborated during the spring and summer school. In my experience, Paras provide an essential service to our students, and their contributions should not be underestimated or undervalued.

Erin Wurlitzer – Certified Occupational Assistant:

Ms. Wurlitzer spoke on behalf of the OT, Speech and Language Assistants about what they do, and are under the paraprofessional contract. She continued that Speech and OT Assistants are licensed and every two years have to renew that license in the state of Massachusetts. A national board exam is required in order to practice. We see 40 or more students starting the first week of school. We meet with our supervisors to discuss caseloads. Our students require specialized services, and our specialized services we need time to prepare our therapy in tandem with our therapists. We are required by the state to have 30 hours of continuing education to keep our license. We create all of our lessons to suit the IEP, also needing scheduled time to plan.

She spoke on behalf of the paras who are an asset to the teachers, and part of the school community and seasoned professionals.

Over the summer, Ms. Wurlitzer took off her OT hat and worked as a Para. Ms. Jenifer Medeiros was the teacher, and gave permission to share this email: Ms. Medeiros wrote: *Hello, I just want to give some feedback to remote BOOST from this summer. It was amazing. We had eight out of the original 11 children participate. All parents participated, and students were engaged. Miss Erin (Wurlitzer) was a huge asset to the program, and I could not have done it with this level of success without her.*

Ms. Wurlitzer concluded that this is just one of the reasons why we are essential in the school district.

Any other business:

Mr. Flaherty announced on September 3, he would not be able to attend the meeting.

Chair Bacchiocchi asked if there was a motion to adjourn.

A motion was moved by Ms. Rossi and seconded by Mr. Flaherty.
All those in favor:

5 – yea
0 – nay
0 – abstain

VOTE: 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: 

List of Documents: Minutes June 18, 2020, Minutes July 2, 2020, Minutes July 15, 2020, Superintendent's Newsletter, DESE Guidelines for Transportation, MOU