

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting – Tuesday, December 20, 2011
Juliani Room, Town Hall**

The Open Session of the School Committee meeting convened at 7:30 p.m. Those present included Chair Suzy Littlefield, members Diane Campbell, KC Kato, Wendy Paul, and Ilissa Povich, Superintendent Bella Wong, Assistant Superintendent Salvatore Petralia, and Student Advisory Member Ian Speers. Ms. Littlefield announced that the meeting is being recorded by the local news media.

CONSENT AGENDA

- **Gifts:**
 - Bates PTO** - \$792 – Bus for Franklin Park Zoo Trip
 - Hardy PTO** - \$262.50 – Bus for MFA Trip
 - Hunnewell PTO** - \$225 – Bus for Tangerini Farm Trip
 - \$146.91 – Recorder Belts for Music Department
 - Schofield PTO** - \$1200 – Library Books4
 - Sprague PTO** - \$637.50 – Bus for Field Trips – Gr. K & 3
 - Class of 2011** - \$361.01 – Class Gift for Plants @ New High School
 - Halley Moriyama** - \$492 Value – Cameras/Lenses for WMS Art Dept.
 - Leuders Environmental** - \$100 – Building Maintenance
 - Best Buddies Contributions** - \$14,500 (Contributors Listing Attached)
- **Lane Change**
 - Master's +30**
 - Linda Widmayer** (effective 12/12/11)

Superintendent Wong acknowledged and extended her appreciation to those individuals contributing to the Best Buddies Program, totaling \$14,500.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Campbell and seconded by Ms. Paul, the School Committee **unanimously VOTED** to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

RECOGNITIONS

Ms. Wong recognized the Wellesley Education Foundation for its fall grant awards totaling over \$61,158 in grants in a broad spectrum of areas, from technology to programming.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Paul reported that she and Ms. Povich and she attended a meeting last week concerning internal air quality concerns at the Schofield School. She indicated that the Facilities Director has reported that significant work has been completed on the school's HVAC system and that monthly testing of air quality will continue. In addition, based on recommendations made by the Mass Department of Public Health (MDPH) during its visit to Schofield School, building work is being proposed in two areas: insulating the back wall of the 1993 wing to address humidity levels and applying a spray water repellent to the exterior brick work to act as a barrier to water intrusion. There was consensus among the group that this work and the continued air quality monitoring are positive steps in addressing the air quality issues at Schofield School. Representatives from the MDPH came to the school for a followup visit on December 13th. A report on this site visit is expected by mid-January. After receipt of the report, attendees from last week's meeting will reconvene to discuss the reports findings, and it is anticipated that a parents forum will be held shortly thereafter.

Ms. Paul commended the students and staff involved in the PowerUp program, a self-defense program offered to high school students. The demonstration presented at the program's graduation was a powerful display of its purpose.

Ms. Campbell provided an update on the Adhoc Facilities Maintenance Committee indicating they are preparing a final report which will recommend an organizational structure that combines current town and schools facilities. The Committee plans to recommend that the new department will report to the Board of Public Works. Ms. Campbell indicated the Facilities Maintenance Department will be separate from the Department of Public Works, however, the Facilities Director will report to the BPW. The goal is to implement as much of the new program as possible by July 1, 2012. Ms. Campbell also reiterated Ms. Paul's sentiments on the very compelling PowerUp graduation she observed, and applauded the work of Kathy Brophy and her students.

Ms. Littlefield reported the Schools capital budget was presented to the Advisory Committee last week. Progress on the high school is going well; the furniture will begin arriving on January 5, 2012 when the building is approved for occupancy. Ms. Littlefield announced that the School Committee has scheduled a listening session with parents on Wednesday, January 4, 2011 at the WMS Library.

Student Congress. Mr. Speers reported that the 'rejection wall' is being reinstated at the high school. He explained the wall is used by seniors to post rejection letters from colleges or other venues. He indicated that planning for Seminar Day, scheduled for April 4th, has begun. Student Congress is also working on a proposal to present to Student Council to lessen the penalties on a first time offense for drinking on school property or school event. Currently, it is a 1 to 10 day suspension, which is reportable to colleges and seems excessive for a first offense. Student Congress members acknowledge that mistakes are made and perhaps a different route can be used for first time offenses such as community service, alcohol classes, etc. Mr. Speers also indicated that parents on Student Council distributed a survey on the honor code proposal and the school improvement plan.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Wong commended Fitness Instructor Kathy Brophy on the presentation of the PowerUp self defense course provided at the high school. She reported that an action plan is in place to deal with mice at WHS and WMS. A new pest management control company began laying traps on December 5th, and to date, a total of eight mice have been caught—4 at the Middle School and 4 at the High School. The vendor has indicated that these findings do not provide evidence of an infestation. With regard to the MASBO review, Ms. Wong anticipates a final report in January. She also reported she has met with building principals concerning Chartwells food service, and has provided the feedback she received to Chartwells leadership. A draft response has been prepared by Chartwells, which she will forward to the principals. Ms. Wong informed the Committee that staff has been working with the Police Department to develop a method of sending text messages/emails to parents when school is cancelled. Families must log on to the police website and provide a cellphone or email address where the communication can be sent. Notices will still be posted in the usual media venues.

CITIZENS SPEAK

Michael Kiernan, 12 Martin Road, thanked School Committee members for their time, dedication and continued support. He recommended that the funds being paid to Ms. Berdell during her voluntary leave should be deducted from the pending vacation pay she will be paid, and also expressed his hope that additional vacation time is not being accrued during her voluntary leave of absence.

Franny Campbell, 156 Barton Road, expressed her continued concerns with the current food service program and urged the Committee not to renew Chartwells' contract for next year. She presented the committee with a petition signed by a number of residents/parents who are concerned with the current food service operation including food quality, facility cleanliness, turnover of employees, and recent

rodent issues. Ms. Campbell asked that the Committee reverse its decision on privatization and return to its previous operation.

Jonathan Simon, President of Wellesley Teachers Association, acknowledged the frustrations by many in the community, but noted that the District's teachers have continued to provide quality education to the community's children. He thanked the Committee for its ongoing commitment to the schools.

ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

CORI Policy Update. Deputy Police Chief Bill Brooks provided an overview of the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) reporting system, its purpose and limitations. Attorney Jim Pender, Labor Counsel for the Town of Wellesley, addressed the CORI law and recent changes in the law, the uses of criminal record information by the School Department, and unauthorized dissemination of information on CORIs. Mr. Petralia discussed the process used in requesting and reviewing CORI reports. Mr. Petralia noted that the CORI check is only one piece of a very comprehensive interview process for new employees, which he reviewed. Ms. Povich then presented proposed changes to the Committee's current policy, noting that after checking with other entities, she found that the policy is fairly standard, but there are a number of ways to tighten the policy and still comply with the law, including expanding the scope of individuals subject to CORIs, consult with Police on those CORIs that need further review; increased due diligence in obtaining additional information including retrieval of information from courts where appropriate. Ms. Povich indicated the policy is in draft form and will be posted on the website for comment.

Security Camera System Policy. Ms. Wong indicated the purpose of the policy is to enhance school safety and security for students, staff and community members who visit the school, while not invading the privacy of those individuals. She noted that the new high school will have security cameras, the School Committee has approved a security system on buses, and security cameras have been requested for the Middle School. While not required, it is felt that there is a need to have a policy in place which addresses that the cameras are in use, the location of the cameras, their intended use, and who will have access to the videos. It is planned that the cameras will be in public areas with clearly posted signage, and only select school personnel will be authorized to monitor the videos, and in compliance with the law, there may be occasions when the videos will be shared with the Police Department. The draft policy has been reviewed by the Police Department and will be posted on the District website for public comment.

WMS and WHS Program of Studies for 2012-13. The Committee was joined by Director of Curriculum and Instruction Becky McFall, WHS Principal Andrew Keough, and WMS Interim Principal Jamie Chisum who presented the proposed changes to the WMS and WHS Program of Studies for 2012-13 School Year.

FY13 Budget Guideline. Ms. Wong indicated she anticipates preparation of a level service budget, and is requesting guidance for program enhancements. The Committee expressed concern with the magnitude of the anticipated override request, and the need for funds as the result of any changes required to the Business Office. It was felt that the addition of programs due to enrollment increases is appropriate, and proposed expansions to the therapeutic programs are justified. The Committee indicated that small advancements and modifications would be considered and discussed, in light of the override.

Encroachment Policy. After a brief discussion, upon a motion made by Ms. Campbell and seconded by Ms. Povich, the Committee **unanimously VOTED** to support the encroachment policy as presented on November 27, 2011.

TEC Update. The Committee discussed the District's membership status as it relates to TEC, The Education Cooperative. Student Service Director Linda Waters has been requested to determine the financial impact of terminating membership. The School Committee voted termination of the TEC membership last year, but due to the timing of the vote, based on TEC's bylaws, the District was placed on inactive status. After a brief discussion, upon a motion made by Ms. Povich and seconded by Ms. Paul, the Committee **unanimously VOTED** to terminate its relationship with TEC unless it is determined that it is financially advantageous to continue as a TEC member.

Superintendent Search. Ms. Kato provided an update on the superintendent search, noting that six proposals for an executive search firm have been received and are being reviewed by Chris Ketchen, the Town's procurement officer. She requested that the Chair appoint the search committee which is composed of Ms. Kato, Ms. Povich, Selectman Ellen Gibbs, HR Board Member Naomi Stonberg and WEF Co-President Patti Quigley for the purposes of evaluating the proposals, as well as identifying the Advisory Search Committee, and continue to shepherd the process. Ms. Littlefield appointed the Search Committee as recommended by Ms. Kato. Ms. Kato also indicated that the deadline for expressions of interest for the Advisory Search Committee and/or focus groups, is Friday, December 23, 2011.

CITIZENS SPEAK No one present wished to speak.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Executive Secretary