



# Weymouth

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## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Weymouth School Committee

#### BUDGET SUB COMMITTEE

111 Middle St

March 4, 2020

Meeting Minutes

(approved 3/12/20)

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**Members In Attendance:** John Sullivan (Chair), Kathy Curran, Tracey Nardone, Carrie Palazzo-6:15pm

**Members Absent:** Lisa Belmarsh, Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw, Robert Hedlund

**Also Present:** Superintendent Jennifer Curtis-Whipple, Assistant Superintendent Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent Robert Wargo, Alyssa Bosse, Manager of Finance

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**The Meeting Came to Order At 6:01pm.**

Dr. Sullivan welcomed the large number of people who attended the meeting, and asked if there was a particular issue they were present to discuss, offering to move that topic to the top of the agenda for their convenience. Multiple people said they were interested in non-union compensation.

Mrs. Curran made a motion to take out of order Non Union Salary. Seconded by Mrs. Nardone. Motion passed unanimously.

**Non-Union Salary - Review Discussion**

Copies of Non Union salary grids and steps, and non union policy (attached to these minutes) were passed out.

Members introduced themselves.

Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that over the last year the School Committee implemented a non union compensation review committee. Members were: Assistant Superintendent Smith, Superintendent Curtis-Whipple, Principal Costello, Principal Meehan, Associate Principal Monahan, Principal Burm, and Alyssa Bosse. The committee looked at the salary grades and did comparisons with other districts. Mr. Smith advised that the abbreviation of COLA is for 'cost of living adjustment'. Mr. Smith gave an overview of the grades and steps and proposed a 2% COLA. The chief of staff memo is recommending a 2.5% increase so the School Department updated the proposed increase to 2.5%

The Superintendent advised that the school department does typically try to match and adhere to what the town is doing.

Mr. Smith advised that it is early in the budget process and the proposal will need to go in front of the School Committee, the Mayor's office, and the Town Council.

For FY21 Mr Smith advised that in addition to the proposed COLA for School Year and year round Secretary, and Head Secretary grids as well as BCBA/O&M be comparable to other districts.

The Superintendent reiterated that BCBA salaries are not where they should be and it's something to address to retain/attract highly qualified staff.

Mr. Smith advised that the final vote will be in April and thanked the many non-union employees in the room for attending.

Dr. Sullivan explained that public comment would be welcomed after the member/administration discussion.

Mrs. Nardone clarified that the non union line in the budget is including these increases and would match the 2.5% increase.

Mrs. Curran echoed that the 60K in the non union line can cover the increase and adjustment to the 3 grids. Full time employee hours were discussed. Mrs. Curran stated that she wanted the budget to reflect all the variations, with Extended School Year also. That will be talked about later in the meeting.

Dr. Sullivan stated that school year and summer salaries are not explicitly linked. He also explained to people attending for the first time that budget sub was to gather information to make decisions and then look at the budget as a whole to make final decisions in the spring. He also stated that the Superintendent retained the ability to make adjustments to step placement and other aspects of non-union compensation based on her sole judgement.

Weycare was highlighted as an area that was already overhauled in terms of employee salary.

Public questions:

Mr. Perez inquired about the increase and COLA, and steps of the secretary and head secretary positions. It was stated that the first 2 steps were eliminated and that the former step 3 is now step 1 and the steps increased from 8 to 10.

Another citizen questioned the difference between a school year secretary and school year. head secretary. Principal Burm stated that a SY head secretary is a primary school secretary and special education secretaries and maybe CTE.

### **WeyCare - Fee Review**

Assistant Superintendent Smith gave an overview of the Weycare Rate handouts stating that Weycare is part of the fee review cycle and will be reviewed every year. The blue copy was the staff rate and the white copy was public rate. Last year a 5% increase was imposed due to staff increase and the Early Education and Care (EEC) voucher program increase. The first page is current rates, the second page showed the effects of a 2.5% increase and the third page showed a 5% increase.

There will not be a morning Weycare program at JECC or any programs next year at Abigail Adams due to low enrollment, particularly since the fifth grade would be moving to the primary schools.

Weycare director Mrs. Ware reiterated that for next year for 6th and 7th grade the number for enrollment is too small to justify staffing and that all of the after school clubs are fabulous and that is where students go.

Mrs. Nardone left the table at 6:24pm and returned at 6:28.

The Superintendent repeated that the enrollment was too small to justify staffing and wanted to give families plenty of notice.

Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that Weycare is part of the revolving budget and the proposed increase is driven by increases required by EEC as part of their voucher program.

Alyssa Bosse left at 6:28-6:30

Superintendent Curtis-Whipple advised that the EEC voucher affected over 100 students (too many to be displaced) and that there were a lot of moving parts and the district will do what is needed to stay compliant.

Mr. Perez inquired about the increase in compliance requirements and the reason. It was for increased certification/qualification requirements for staff and more reporting requirements from the district. He also mentioned that maybe enrollment would increase with the addition of full day Kindergarten.

Mrs. Nardone advised that all of these were factors, that there were many hoops to go through and the time between necessary spending and EEC reimbursement time was too long. She also stated that there is a new commissioner and maybe new changes will come.

Mr. Smith advised that if enough districts opt out hopefully the EEC would re-evaluate. He also stated that Weycare may be getting some students from the STARZ program.

Dr. Sullivan added that 100 students is too many for the YMCA or similar organization to be able to pick up as is done in some other districts.

Ms. Palazzo commented that there is not an "opting in" incentive from the state.

The Superintendent strongly recommended an increase.

Mr. Perez advised that the program is of critical importance to families and wonders what happens if requirements aren't fulfilled. It was stated that if the district was not compliant then the state was not obligated to pay.

Mrs. Ware has been with WPS for 5 ½ years.

### **School Lunch - Fee Review**

Mr. Smith gave an overview of the proposed school lunch rate. He advised that it will be revisited in April for a vote.

Alyssa Bosse, Finance Manager and Liz Sauro, Food Service Director performed a comprehensive financial audit as did Melanson and Heath performed (of FY19) for the town and they will meet often to reconcile numbers with Chartwells .

Mrs. Smith advised that for the last 2 years, Weymouth has been below the minimum required rate and recommended an increase (highlighted amounts). The increase would have a direct financial impact. The increase works out to be \$45 over the year for lunch, and \$18 over the year for breakfast. The increase kept compliance without a drastic increase.

### **Extended School Year (ESY) - Rate Recommendations**

Mr. Smith presented a draft of ESY hourly rates. These employees are non-union. The rates have not changed in 15 years and Assistant Superintendent Smith shared that this is a small step to remedy this situation but that what the district could spend in one year

couldn't undo the last 15 years. He expects to be looking at these rates again soon. Compensation for similar programs in other towns like Quincy, Rockland, Hingham, Hanover and Abington were compared.

The increase (30K) will max out but be covered in the ESY (Special Education) budget, which will be going from \$150-\$180K. Increases talked about at this meeting were \$1 more for paraprofessionals and CNA paraprofessionals than were proposed at the last budget sub meeting.

Mrs. Cederholm added that in the contract CNA paras receive \$1 more than paraprofessionals based on their step. She further stated that if there is a 20 cent increase for each year then the hourly rate should be over \$17 and that paraprofessionals do not get paid year round like teachers but that they work ESY as an additional job to earn a living wage. She advised that Abington pays Paras \$19, Hanover \$18 and Hull \$25 and that wage will be discussed in contract negotiations.

Mrs. Nardone pointed out that teachers and paras may elect to receive paychecks year round.

Patrick Ricardo, resident of Whitman who works in Weymouth as an Orientation and Mobility Specialist (O&M) inquired as to why O&M Specialist was not included in the same category as BCBA. He is also advised that the demand for the specialists is growing and will increase.

Dr. Curtis Whipple said O&M should be added and that it should be paid the same hourly rate as BCBA (\$50). Also, TVI (teacher of the visually impaired) should be inserted and should be paid the tutor rate (\$35) for ESY .

Mr. Perez questioned what the difference between the Course Instructor and lead teacher is and what the Instructor rate was last year. Discussion determined the position of Course Instructor will be eliminated, as no one has been in that category for many years.

Mr. Smith reiterated that the para increase was the greatest increase. The only change between the last draft and this draft was an extra dollar for paras and CNAs.

Regular teachers last year received \$30 and the proposed change is to raise that to \$35.

Mr. Murphy questioned if the ESY(Extended School Year) Budget included all of the positions on this draft and was assured by Mr. Smith that it does, that the total cost will depend on staffing (based on student need) and that the Instructor position had not been previously staffed.

The location for ESY 2020 was discussed and the location has not yet been determined. The district is still working on logistics, particularly around all the changes associated with the redistribution of resources associated with Chapman-related changes around the district.

A guest thanked Assistant Superintendent Smith and Ms. Bosse for meeting with them and listening to their concerns.

### **Student Opportunity Act (SOA) - Review Plan and Discussion**

Mr. Smith gave a summary of the Student Opportunity Act and shared that though the district was receiving little new money, filing the short form was a matter of compliance.

Assistant Superintendent Smith, Assistant Superintendent Wargo, the Special Education Director, and the Finance Manager attended a training at North River Collaborative explaining changes in Chapter 70 and circuit breaker funding including transportation with regard to special education. Transportation Billing and determining a daily rate for reimbursement will be examined further.

Hopefully circuit breaker will reimburse up to 75% of Out of District costs above the threshold.

Charter School reimbursement and assessment was discussed. The state increased Charter-related aid, but increased assessments by more.

Ms. Palazzo advised that Randolph is first in the number of students sent to charters at 183 and Weymouth is at 179

Mr. Smith advised that the SOA short form would be discussed at the March 12 School Committee meeting and would be voted on at the March 26th meeting.

The Superintendent advised that the district has focused its filing on increased spending for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies and Professional Development with an eye to eventually adopting a SEL curriculum.

Ms. Palazzo inquired if there was a formula to calculate and how Hingham received more. Special Educations, English Language Learners, economically disadvantaged and paid benefits.

Dr. Sullivan advised that there is a spreadsheet on DESE online.

Mrs. Curran clarified that a monetary figure should be in the SOA filing when it is presented to the School Committee.

**The Meeting Adjourned at 7:21pm** on the motion of Mrs. Curran, seconded by Mrs. Nardone. Passed unanimously.

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**Documents Attached to These Minutes:**

- FY20 Non Salary Table
- FY21 Proposed Salary Table
- Non Union Employee Policy
- Chief of Staff Memo dated March 3, 2020
- WeyCare Staff and Public Rates
- Paid Lunch Equity table
- Draft Hourly Rates for Work Beyond the Instructional Day/School Year
- DRAFT SOA Short Form

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John P. Sullivan", is written over a horizontal line.

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John Sullivan