

November 16, 2011

A meeting of the Wareham School Committee was held on Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wareham Middle School Auditorium.

Members present were Geoff Swett, Kenny Fontes, Cliff Sylvia, Rhonda Veugen, and Jessica Hanson as well as Superintendent Dr. Rabinovitch and recording secretary, Mrs. Ruiz. Absent was member Rachel Gillette.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Swett at 7:00 p.m.

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following statements were made regarding the cut of Social Studies at Wareham Middle School for this school year:

Christine Mars, President WEA, requested the reinstatement of social studies and programs which have been cut or reduced at the Middle School. She expressed concern with students not being prepared when entering the High School. Teachers teaching Critical Thinking World View are not certified. The WEA is making a stand for quality education.

Stephanie Wallace, Gr. 7 Teacher, stated it has been an emotional year with the dissolving of a total department. She reviewed the cost of the alternative Critical Thinking World View program including training and licensing teachers in Humanities. As a taxpayer this alternative is not a measure to save money.

Ronnie Oliver, Health Teacher at Wareham Middle School, stated that the curriculum is being cut continually and wanted to know how students can reach these goals and their academic full potential. He asked to bring back social studies.

Jen Crimaldi, Teacher at Wareham Middle School, stated that the class sizes in Math, ELA, and Science are larger with the cut of social studies.

Laura Pol, parent of two middle school students and a teacher Minot Forest, stated that in order for students to be good citizens they need social studies, even if social studies is not on MCAS. It is part of the basic education and she hopes to bring social studies back.

Deanna Semple, elementary teacher and parent, stated she was losing faith in the Middle School. Students have lost sports, music, art, language and now social studies. The parents did not know about this cut and Critical Thinking World View teachers are not certified and not passionate about this subject.

Brian Fitzgerald – Gr. 5 Teacher and a former social studies Middle School teacher, asked what type of success students are going to have not knowing culture and history outside of Wareham and the United States. We are denying children to compete and succeed in the future.

Mia Pol, student at Wareham Middle School, asked to have social studies class back and allow teachers to focus on their main subject.

Cindy Bliss, ELA teacher at Wareham Middle School, stated that she had taught social studies and is now teaching Critical Thinking World View. The change has caused a lost collaboration between ELA and Social Studies. Students are losing out since the format of Critical Thinking is 4 days out of a 6 day schedule. Children are making a qualitative judgment on its importance and she urged the committee to bring back social studies.

Sheila Furtado, a teacher for the last 26 years, 14 years in social studies and 7 years as the Social Studies Curriculum Leader, stated that social studies is connected to every aspect we learn. Teachers received the curriculum one day before they had to teach it with a pile of resources. This was not fair to her colleagues and it is imperative to bring social studies back.

Missy Decas, parent of an 8<sup>th</sup> grader and a proponent of the Middle School, felt that this year there is a decline in services to kids including the Renaissance Program being removed. When parents try to get involved, they feel they are not listened to. We are losing students in band and the arts as well.

Jaime Pelletier, parent of an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, believes the effects of new Critical Thinking World View is unfortunate because students are losing out and asked the committee to consider bringing social studies back for our children.

Jean Frederickson, a parent of middle school student in the Theological Education field, has reservations about teaching Islam. Critical Thinking is a way of looking at the world and middle school students are not able in their developmental stage. Teachers must learn the content and entire structure. She has considered home schooling or private school for her 4<sup>th</sup> grader.

Chair Swett stated that he appreciated the time and comments of the individuals here this evening. Approximately 1/3 of Massachusetts school districts are funded a minimum due to health care costs and cuts in special education reimbursements. Communities had to make very difficult decisions which were to reduce the number of teachers. He invited the public to attend meetings starting in January addressing the budget for next year including a public hearing with the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, and the Town Administrator.

(7:25 p.m. Ken Fontes arrived at the meeting.)

Chair Swett asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of two former long time employees - Joan Wilson, Secretary & Kathy Murphy, teacher.

#### **GOOD NEWS**

- Superintendent Rabinovitch read a letter from Town Moderator, Claire Smith, thanking the high school Chorus for opening Town Meeting by singing the National Anthem and thanked Mr. Chasson and the JROTC for their participation in the presentation of the colors.
- Jessica Hanson – Open House WHS tomorrow evening and some clubs are conducting a can food drive with competition amongst advisories.
- Rhonda Veugen announced the following events:  
This weekend Decas School Fair fundraiser  
Coordinated Family Community Council Reading is Magic program tomorrow evening at 6PM at Hammond School  
The Hammond/Minot Forest annual coat giveaway  
Events about college for parents at WHS

#### **Minutes of the Meeting**

Mrs. Veugen moved to approve the minutes of October 26, 2011, seconded by Mr. Swett.

Mrs. Veugen asked to add under the guidance survey section “and that Mr. Goldman and Principal Palladino reach out to WHS Alumni Association to garner support for next year’s survey.”

VOTE as amended: yea – 2; nay – 0; abstain – 2 (Mr. Fontes, Dr. Sylvia)

#### **School Committee Reports**

- Policy Review  
Textbook Selection and Adoption – Mrs. Veugen reviewed the changes. Dr. Sylvia moved to adopt the policy as presented, seconded by Mr. Fontes.  
VOTE: yea – 4; nay – 0; abstain – 0  
  
Goals Statement – Mrs. Veugen stated that this policy is written from the five year strategic plan. Dr. Sylvia moved to approve the policy as presented, seconded by Mr. Fontes  
VOTE: yea – 4; nay – 0; abstain – 0

- Superintendent's Curriculum Advisory Committee – Dr. Sylvia reported that at last week's meeting a healthy discussion took place about the situation with social studies at the Middle School.
- Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee – Mr. Fontes stated that the committee will meet tomorrow and he will report at the next meeting.
- Report on MASC/MASS Conference – Chair Swett stated that the Wareham Public Schools made a presentation about teacher evaluation. This was the result of two years of work and was a great success. The same issue was discussed with the delegate assembly as a resolution and was passed virtually unanimously by the Commonwealth delegates. The resolution addresses that for teachers to have a fair evaluation it takes time and resources and is best conducted by a person intimately involved with the person such as a Department Head and/or Instructional Leader. He also attended a presentation on a legal case involving middle school electronic social media.
- Chair Swett is part of a statewide committee working on an evaluation instrument on superintendents. A comprehensive rubric is being developed. He will report as meetings continue on the dropping enrollment of Cape schools.

#### **Superintendent's Report**

- Update on China Exchange Initiative – The administrator cannot come to Wareham because he was not able to get a travel visa but plans on coming next fall. Dr. Rabinovitch will visit him in April 2012.
- Curriculum Review Advisory Committee – We need to continue working on the social studies issue.
- Support for Graduate Students' Study on Transportation – A meeting took place between the Chair of the School Committee, the Chair of the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator, the Superintendent and the Chair of the Finance Committee. On November 8, 2011 another meeting took place and Mr. Andrews, Mr. Heath and Dr. Rabinovitch drafted a motion. Mr. Andrews brought this motion before the Board of Selectmen and amendments were made to the DRAFT motion. We have thus missed the opportunity for grad students to work on the study at this time.  
Dr. Rabinovitch stated that in the spirit of trying to work together with the Capital Planning Committee and the Finance Committee, who asked for this study, he supported this motion.  
Chair Swett reviewed the background of the transportation issue and is convinced that the wisest course is to keep transportation under the school.  
Mr. Fontes expressed that there have been committee meetings over and over on transportation. He wants to focus on getting more teachers.  
Dr. Sylvia stated that he understood the political issue and the need for Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee but is more concerned about safety of kids and the cost. The school department has been keeping town side of government operating by saving \$1 million each year in operating its own transportation department. We need school buses.  
Mrs. Veugen stated that we continue to delay what is needed right now and both a long-term plan and the immediate need needs to be addressed at the same time.  
Dr. Rabinovitch stated that the Town Administrator recognizes the need is now and cannot wait until next fall. A plan is being developed by end of December to fulfill the lease bid.  
Mrs. Veugen wanted to make it known the two reasons for not voting on the DRAFT motion are 1) may not be an opportunity to work with the grad students; and 2) the amendments made by Board of Selectmen in order to work with them.
- Dr. Rabinovitch read a request from OPEIU, Local 6, to open negotiations – Mr. Fontes and Dr. Sylvia will be on the negotiation subcommittee.

#### **RtI Inform Software**

Mr. Louzan gave an overview of what Inform Software will do. The two reasons why Inform Software was purchased are #1 Assessment of student learning, and #2 Essential Component of the RtI Framework. Inform is a data analysis and system support tool which works on top of Power School through Pearson. The key features of Inform for the district include one location for data; data analysis from multiple source; and documentation for correction.

A video of teachers from Farmington, CT school district using Inform for RtI was shown.

Mr. Louzan reviewed the steps completed and the next steps of Inform. Another presentation to the School Committee will be scheduled in March with data in place.

Chair Swett asked Mr. Louzan to have staff at every level represented to address the value of the software at the March presentation.

Dr. Rabinovitch stated that extended time for collaboration grade meetings is needed.

Concerns expressed by the committee included the need for more information on infrastructure in place for new software, the systemic capacity to make it work to its optimal potential – personnel, common planning time, use of power school at elementary level now.

#### **School Bus Lease Bid**

Dr. Rabinovitch reported that he opened bids the morning of Town Meeting with the understanding an article for leasing buses would be voted upon. The low bid was \$10,345.51 per vehicle x 7 buses \$72,418.57 for one year x 3 years \$217,255.71.

Dr. Rabinovitch recommended the Committee request of bidders to hold their prices for sixty days and to award the lease either by funds from the town at a special town meeting or use the transportation revolving account funds.

Mrs. Veugen moved to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent, seconded by Dr. Sylvia.

If the committee does not ask for a sixty day extension, we must send out letters to the bidders not awarding the bid due to no funds.

VOTE: yea – 3; nay - 1 (Mr. Fontes); abstain - 0

#### **Enrollment/Class Size Reports**

Dr. Rabinovitch reviewed elementary class size by grade which shows parity between schools K-5. He then reviewed the enrollment of our secondary schools and class size by subject at the Middle School, 23.6 and at the High School, 17.375.

Dr. Sylvia asked for class size data by individual teacher for the middle and high school.

Mrs. Veugen asked for class size data for the last five years to see the trend and also data on Wareham students attending out of district schools. The out of district data will be part of the School Attending Report completed in January.

Mr. Fontes moved to continue the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m., seconded by Dr. Sylvia.

VOTE: yea – 4; nay – 0; abstain – 0

#### **Financial Reports**

Ms. Miranda reviewed the following financial reports

- The monthly report summary 4.09% difference in the remaining balance from last year. She will provide the committee with consumption vs kilowatt cost for electricity.

(Jessica left meeting 10:04 p.m.)

- Revolving Accounts – comparison of current balances and previous balances at the same time of year. Chair Swett suggested the need for a methodology on spending from revolving accounts specific to transportation.

- Budget Transfer Request - \$63,720 transfer to nursing contracted services (new account) for out of district student placement from tuition. This service was previously being billed within the tuition.\

Mr. Fontes moved to approve the transfer of funds as presented, seconded by Mrs. Veugen.

VOTE: yea – 4; nay – 0; abstain – 0

#### **Proposed Changes to 2011-2012 School Calendar**

The following changes to the school calendar were proposed:

- January 13, 2012 from early dismissal to staff inservice day
- March 6 from inservice day to early release day
- June 6 early release day moved to May 24 due to Science MCAS

The in-service day on March 6<sup>th</sup> is the state primary. The Town Administrator will call the Police Chief for extra police officers at polling stations at schools in the morning and at noon for traffic concerns. He also spoke with the Town Administrator about changing the April elections to a Saturday in the future.

Mrs. Veugen moved to amend the 2011-2012 school calendar as presented, seconded by Mr. Fontes.

Parents will be notified through global connect, newsletters, and posted in the schools.

VOTE: yea – 4; nay – 0; abstain – 0

#### **Any other business**

None

Mr. Fontes moved to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Veugen.

VOTE: yea – 4; nay – 0; abstain – 0

The meeting adjourned at 10:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



#### **List of documents:**

Letter October 28, 2011 from Claire Smith, Town Moderator  
Policies – Textbook Selection and Adoption & Goals Statement  
Draft Motion 11/8/11  
OPEIU Letter Commence Negotiations  
Pearson Inform Overview  
Class Size Report 2011-2012 – October 31, 2011  
Wareham School Function Summary  
Revolving Accounts 11/10/2011  
2011 November Spreadsheet  
Appropriation Budget Transfers FY'12  
School Calendar 2011-2012



