

**WATERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
WATERTOWN, MA**

**RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
149 MAIN STREET**

**MONDAY  
MARCH 5, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**I. Roll Call**

The School Committee Chairman, Mr. John Portz, called to order the March 5, 2018 meeting of the School Committee at 7:00 PM. Present were School Committee members Ms. Kendra Foley, Ms. Eileen Hsü-Balzer, Mr. Mark Sideris, Ms. Amy Donohue, Ms. Lily Rayman-Read, and Ms. Lindsay Mosca. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Deanne Galdston, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning Dr. Theresa B. McGuinness, Director of Human Resources Mr. Craig Hardimon, Director of Student Services Ms. Kathleen Desmarais, and various members of the public. Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations Ms. Mary C. DeLai was not in attendance.

The Chairman asked for a moment of silence for the seventeen students and educators who had lost their lives in the recent school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

**II. High School Student Advisors**

Miss Lauren Petrillo and Miss Emily Koufos, student advisors to the School Committee, reported on recent happenings at Watertown High School. They said that spring season sports were about to begin, the boys' basketball team had won two playoff games so far, applications for various senior scholarships were being distributed, and the "Mr. WHS" fundraiser was scheduled for March 20, 2018 at Watertown High School. Over February break, some students had travelled to Italy and Camp Sunshine for school trips.

**III. Public Forum – Session I**

No member of the public spoke.

**IV. Teaching and Learning Showcase: Technology in the Classroom**

Dr. Deanne Galdston, Superintendent of Schools, introduced Mr. George Skuse, Coordinator of Information Technology, and Ms. Toni Carlson, Coordinator of Digital Learning, who gave a [presentation](#) on the technology initiatives in Watertown's classrooms. Twice-monthly "Tech Talk" meetings among district leadership and also meetings of the Technology Committee, comprised of WPS staff members and members of the community, were said to keep the Watertown Public Schools communicating internally about improvements to the district's technology. Ms. Carlson said that every student in grades 6-12 is loaned a laptop for the school year and in the spring, the district would begin administering MCAS 2.0 as a computer-based test (CBT).

**V. Action Items – Discussion and Vote**

**A. Resolution on School Safety and Gun Control**

The Chairman read the following resolution:

*Whereas, the recent shooting tragedy at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida took the lives of 17 students and educators;*

*Whereas, acts of gun violence in schools and the broader community are an increasingly significance cause of death among adolescents;*

*Whereas, the access and availability of guns is subject to widely-varying laws and regulations established by states and the federal government;*

*Whereas, school safety is a fundamental concern of the Watertown School Committee and school boards across the country.*

*Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the School Committee of Watertown, Massachusetts urges state and federal policymakers to support laws and regulations that:*

- *Ensure thorough background checks and waiting periods before adults can purchase or own guns;*
- *Prohibit the presence of guns on school property, unless by a law enforcement officer;*

- *Ban the sale of semi-automatic, assault-style weapons as well as high-capacity magazines or clips;*
- *Strengthen funding and support for counseling and mental health services for students.*

*The School Committee gives its support to responsible civic actions by students, educators and others who are raising the visibility of this issue and seeking changes in public policy.*

A motion was made to approve the resolution.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### **B. Proposed Policy Changes**

1. [IHBAA: Observation of Special Education Programs](#)

A motion was made to adopt policy IHBAA as amended.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. [JMA: Awards for Championship Teams or Athletes](#)

A motion was made to adopt policy JMA as amended.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. [KI: Visitors to Schools](#)

A motion was made to adopt policy KI as amended.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. [KIA: Guests at Secondary School Dances](#)

A motion was made to adopt policy KIA.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### **C. Approval of Gifts:**

1. \$100 from the Watertown High School PTSO for the WHS robotics team
2. \$20 from an anonymous donor for the WHS robotics team
3. \$1,000 from Belmont Savings Bank for the WHS robotics team
4. \$250 from Panis Pannay and Kimberly Thompson for the Watertown Family Network
5. \$25 from Margaret Macri for the Watertown Family Network
6. \$100 from Vincent Piccirilli and Anita Meiklejohn for the Watertown Family Network
7. \$20 from Katherine and Benjamin Rausch for the Watertown Family Network
8. \$15 from Rachel Rein for the Watertown Family Network
9. \$1,750 from an online fundraiser for the WHS robotics team

A motion was made to accept the above-listed gifts.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made for \$17,507 from the Watertown Community Foundation and the Watertown Educators Association for Watertown Public Schools.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### **D. Approval of Overnight Field Trip**

A motion was made to approve an [overnight field trip](#) for Watertown High School students to attend

“A Mountain Classroom” in Crawford Notch, New Hampshire from May 2-4, 2018.  
The motion was seconded.  
The motion passed unanimously.

## **VI. Reports**

### **A. School Safety in Watertown Public Schools**

Dr. Galdston delivered to the School Committee a [memo](#) detailing the district’s safety measures and systems of support. In the wake of the recent school shooting in Parkland, Florida, Dr. Galdston assured the community that the district is “a school system that understands and values school safety while maintaining a commitment to the mission of our schools: educating and nurturing each and every child.” She noted an upcoming School Safety Forum scheduled for 7:00 PM on April 4, 2018 in the Watertown Middle School auditorium. The forum would include members of Watertown Public Schools, plus the Watertown Police and Fire Departments.

Dr. Galdston said that between the Watertown Public Schools and the Watertown Police Department exists a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which outlines and facilitates communications of the two bodies for improved student, staff, and community safety.

### **B. School Calendar**

Dr. Galdston and Dr. McGuinness presented a [draft of the 2018-2019 school year calendar](#) for review by the School Committee and the public. A School Committee member suggested adding the high school graduation date to the calendar. Another member suggested adding Watertown High School’s Open House night to the calendar.

### **C. Subcommittees**

#### **1. Budget and Finance**

A motion was made to approve the [report](#) of the February 12, 2018 Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### **2. Athletics**

A motion was made to approve the [report](#) of the February 28, 2018 Athletics Subcommittee meeting.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **D. WPS Projects and Activities:**

#### **1. Building for the Future – Update**

Mr. Portz reported that the Town Manager had recently appointed a School Building Committee of eleven members to help steer the elementary and high school building projects.

Dr. Galdston said that the MSBA’s eligibility period, during which Watertown High School may apply to receive state funding for renovation or reconstruction, would open on April 2, 2018.

#### **2. Asbestos Abatement Project at the High School (WHS)**

Dr. Galdston reported the asbestos abatement project at Watertown High School was complete.

#### **3. Strategy Development Team Update**

Dr. Galdston reported on two recent meetings of the WPS Strategy Development Team which was said to be in the process of “visioning” to shape possible future changes to the district’s existing, official vision.

4. **Communications and Marketing Team Update**

Dr. Galdston reported on two recent meetings of the WPS Communications and Marketing Team where the group was said to be working on forming a communication plan based on the district's unique qualities.

**E. Monthly Updates:**

1. **FY18 Budget**

Dr. Galdston presented the [FY18 budget status](#). She said the report showed that the district currently had an unencumbered balance of \$2,665,405 or 5.8% of the original adopted budget.

2. **Enrollment**

The Superintendent reported on [student enrollment numbers](#) across the District. The overall student enrollment had increased by 7 students from the previous month; class sizes had remained largely steady.

3. **Personnel**

Mr. Craig Hardimon, Director of Human Resources, presented a [report](#) on recent personnel changes and noted the district would be joining four upcoming job fairs.

4. **Warrants**

The Chairman presented a [report](#) on warrants recently approved for payment.

**VII. Public Forum – Session II**

No member of the public spoke.

**VIII. Reports**

**A. Chairman's**

The Chairman noted a School Committee retreat had been scheduled for March 7, 2018 from 6:00 to 9:00 PM.

The Chairman said he, Ms. Donohue, Dr. Galdston, and Dr. McGuinness had recently attended a successful and thought-provoking conference sponsored by the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment.

**B. Superintendent's**

The Superintendent said that the district was currently in the midst of hiring to fill the positions of Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Committee, Director of Human Resources, and Athletic Director.

**IX. Next Meeting**

Mr. Portz noted the next scheduled School Committee meeting was scheduled for March 19, 2018.

**X. New Business**

No new business was discussed.

**XI. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM.