

**WATERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WATERTOWN, MA**

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

**MONDAY
SEPTEMBER 11, 2017
7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

I. Roll Call

Mr. John Portz, Chairman, called the September 11, 2017 meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Present were School Committee members Ms. Kendra Foley, Dr. Guido Guidotti, Ms. Eileen Hsü-Balzer, Mr. Mark Sideris, and Ms. Elizabeth Yusem. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Deanne Galdston, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning Dr. Theresa B. McGuinness, Assistant Superintended of Finance & Operations Ms. Mary C. DeLai, Director of Human Resources Mr. Craig Hardimon, Director of Student Services Ms. Kathleen Desmarais, and various members of the public.

The Chairman asked for a moment of silence in memory of the events that transpired on September 11, 2011.

II. High School Student Advisors

Ms. Shirley Lundberg, principal of Watertown High School, introduced the year's new student advisors, Miss Lauren Petrillo and Miss Emily Koufos, to the School Committee.

Miss Petrillo reported that seniors could apply to become "peer leaders," acting on an advisory team formed to help new students acclimate to the high school. Miss Koufos reported that the opening week for fall sports had gone well. They said that they are working to fundraise across Watertown to raise money for senior prom. They noted upcoming auditions for both jazz band and the fall play. They said that most seniors are beginning to apply to colleges.

III. Public Forum – Session I

No member of the public spoke.

IV. Presentation and Discussion

A. District Leadership Retreat

Dr. Dede Galdston reported on the district leadership retreat which had occurred over three days, August 22-24, 2017, at the Commander's Mansion in Watertown.

At the retreat, Dr. Galdston and a team of administrative leaders from the district had worked to finesse and finalize the 2017-2018 improvement strategy of Watertown Public Schools. The four objectives of the District were said to be: to provide all students with a rigorous, relevant, standards-based curriculum throughout the core instructional program; to increase student engagement, agency, and authorship over their own learning in an inclusive educational community; to ensure effective communication among families, students, staff, and the greater community; and to establish effective systems of support and allocate resources to maximize organizational success.

Dr. Galdston said the theory of action to complete the District's objectives was: "If we commit to provide all students with a rigorous standards-based curriculum that engages students through relevant content and inclusive instructional practices; to communicate effectively with the community; and to create systems of support that utilize district resources effectively; then the outcomes for all WPS students in all classrooms will improve."

B. Summer Professional Development

Dr. Theresa McGuinness reported on the District's summer professional development by summarizing a memo she had distributed to the School Committee ahead of the meeting. She said that the back-to-school theme for this summer's professional development had been "teaching and reaching all students." Highlights of the professional development included Empowering Writers I and II,

along with many staff members who partook in advisory teams, committees, and workshops.

Ms. Elizabeth Kaplan, K-5 Math and Science Coordinator, said that District had recently implemented eighteen math teacher leaders who had dedicated time and work to align the curriculum to both Math in Focus and Massachusetts state standards. She said STEMscopes had been implemented into the science curriculum in alignment with Massachusetts state standards.

Ms. Allison Donovan, K-8 Literacy and Title I Coordinator, said the Literacy Team had met to collaborate in various literacy workshops working towards enhanced classroom instruction within the Massachusetts state frameworks.

Ms. Laura Alderson-Rotondo, 6-12 Career & Technical Education Coordinator, updated the School Committee on the District's progress with Project Lead the Way. She said in 2017, the District had received \$57,000 in grants, allowing the high school to add a capstone course and the middle school to implement three enrichment classes.

C. Capital Improvements to Buildings

Ms. Mary DeLai reported on recent capital improvements to WPS buildings, including:

- Watertown High School:
 - Carpeting replacement in the auditorium and library
 - Painting of the auditorium ceiling
 - A/C installed in the main office and principal's office
 - 52 window replacements
 - Refinishing of gymnasium floor
 - Added water bottle refilling stations
 - Added additional security cameras
 - Replacement of a water heater
 - Roof repairs
 - Wireless connectivity upgrades in the auditorium
- Watertown Middle School:
 - 200+ windows replaced
 - Cafeteria serving line and salad bar
 - Security access via iPad
 - New stage risers
 - New mail sorting system
 - Added water bottle refilling stations
- Cunniff Elementary School
 - Gymnasium floor refinished
 - Window seals replaced
 - New classroom furniture
 - Interactive projectors installed
- Hosmer Elementary School
 - Gymnasium floor refinished
 - Kindergarten classroom counter height reduced
 - Interactive projectors installed
- J.R. Lowell Elementary School
 - Carpeting replaced throughout entire building
 - Gymnasium floor refinished
 - Classroom furniture replacements
 - Interactive projectors installed
 - New dishwasher installed
 - All new Aruba wireless access points

A School Committee member said that he was pleased at the amount of work that had been completed over the summer.

V. Action Items – Discussion and Vote

A. Superintendent's Goals for 2017-18

A motion was made to adopt the superintendent's goals for 2017-2018.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

B. School Committee Meeting Schedule for 2017-18

Proposed dates for School Committee meetings throughout the 2017-2018 year were given: October 2, 2017; October 23, 2017; November 13, 2017; December 4, 2017; January 8, 2018; February 5, 2018; March 5, 2018; March 19, 2018; April 2, 2018; April 23, 2018; May 7, 2018; May 21, 2018; June 4, 2018; and June 18, 2018.

A motion was made to approve the list of dates for 2017-2018 School Committee meetings.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

C. Contract with MASC to Facilitate Review of Policy Manual

A motion was made to approve a contract with Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) to facilitate a review of the Watertown Public Schools' School Committee policy manual.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Reports

A. Policy Subcommittee

Dr. Guido Guidotti, Chair of the Policy Subcommittee, reported on the most recent meeting of the subcommittee on August 22, 2017.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2017 meeting of the Policy Subcommittee.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

B. Building for the Future

Ms. Elizabeth Yusem, Chair of the Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee, said a committee of WPS administrators and Town officials had reviewed drafts of a request for services (RFS) for operations project management services and also a request for proposals (RFP) for designer services for the elementary schools facilities project. She said that the RFS would be posted on September 20, 2017 with bids due October 5, 2017. The deadline for proposals in response to the RFP was said to be October 20, 2017.

The Superintendent said she looked forward to the beginning of planning for the future of the elementary schools.

C. School Start Times

The Chairman announced four public forums when community feedback on proposed changes to school start times would be gathered. The public forums announced were scheduled for:

- o September 26, 2017 at 8:30 AM at Hosmer Elementary School
- o September 26, 2017 at 6:30 PM at Watertown High School
- o September 28, 2017 at 8:35 AM at J.R.Lowell Elementary School
- o September 28, 2017 at 6:30 PM at Watertown Middle School

A School Committee member asked if it was possible for any of these meetings to be broadcast on WCA-TV. The Chairman and Superintendent agreed to look into it.

The Superintendent said feedback would also be gathered in an online survey.

D. High School Mascot

Ms. Kendra Foley, Chair of the Mascot Screening Committee, said that the committee was hoping to present mascot options to the School Committee within the next month or two. She said the committee would be collecting community feedback to aid the School Committee in its final choice of adopting a mascot.

E. FY18 Budget Update

Ms. Mary DeLai provided a summary of the status of the FY18 budget. Ms. DeLai said there was currently an unencumbered balance of \$3,762,608 or 8% of the original budget but not all anticipated expenditures had been fully encumbered at this point in the fiscal year.

F. Enrollment Update

The Superintendent provided an update on student enrollment numbers which she said were mostly within classroom size guidelines. She said two classrooms at the Lowell were “on the large side” but one of those classrooms was co-taught with a ratio of one teacher to twelve students and the other classroom had many English language learner (ELL) students who were receiving much of their instruction outside of the classroom. She said one more classroom at the Cunniff had large enrollment but was co-taught.

G. Personnel

Mr. Craig Hardimon reported on recent personnel actions within the district. He said that twenty new teachers had been hired as replacements for others who had left the District, and an additional eight had been hired for new positions. He thanked Ms. Jennifer Hemenway, Administrative Assistant to Human Resources, and Ms. Jennifer Atwood, Payroll Specialist, for their work onboarding these new hires into the District’s computer systems to smoothly.

H. Warrants

Ms. Mary DeLai delivered a report on warrants recently signed by her, the Superintendent, and the

VII. Public Forum – Session II

A member of the public noted her support of Minuteman High School and encouraged students to consider attending. She thanked the District for researching the possible overcrowding of the bus to Minuteman. She encouraged Watertown to consider becoming an official member of the Minuteman district.

VIII. Reports

A. Chairman’s

The Chairman said that he was looking forward to the school year ahead, noting in particular the work to be done for the elementary schools project. He thanked Dr. John Brackett, former Interim Superintendent, for his work through many administrative transitions in the prior year.

Mr. Portz publicly stated that the vacancy on the School Committee caused by Dr. Candace Miller’s departure would be filled directly following the November 2017 election. He noted that Dr. Miller’s absence created some vacancies on the subcommittees; In the interim, Mr. Mark Sideris would take her place on the Athletics Subcommittee, Ms. Kendra Foley would take her place on the Curriculum Subcommittee, and he, Mr. Portz, would take her place on the Budget & Finance Subcommittee.

The Chairman said a School Committee retreat was scheduled for the evening of September 18, 2017.

B. Superintendent's

The Superintendent reported that new teachers were welcomed aboard at orientation on August 28-29, 2017. Districtwide professional development occurred for two days before the opening of school. Students returned to classrooms on September 5, 2017. Dr. Galdston said she was looking forward to the decision on a high school mascot, the elementary schools building project, and many other exciting initiatives.

IX. Next Meeting

The Chairman announced the next monthly School Committee meeting would occur on October 2, 2017. He also noted upcoming Budget & Finance Subcommittee and Policy Subcommittee meetings, yet to be scheduled.

X. New Business

No new business was discussed.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.

Meeting Documents:

- o Memo: Summer Update on Professional Development
- o WPS Improvement Strategy 2017-2018
- o Superintendent's Goals 2017-2018
- o School Committee Proposed Meeting Dates
- o School Start/End Times Public Forums
- o Memo: FY2018 Budget Status
- o Enrollment
- o Warrants
- o Presentation on Summer Professional Development

Minutes submitted by C. Fisher, Administrative Assistant to the Central Office

