

**Woburn School Committee
Woburn Public Schools
55 Locust Street
Woburn, MA 01801**

A regular meeting of the Woburn School Committee was held on April 9, 2024, in the Conference Room of the Joyce Middle School located at 55 Locust Street, Woburn, Massachusetts, starting at 7:00 p.m.

For the purposes of simultaneous viewing, the School Committee arranged for the live stream of the meeting via the Woburn Public Media YouTube Channel.

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mr. Austin-present, Mrs. Chisholm-Present, Ms. Cormier-Present, Ms. Crowley-Present, Mr. Mulrenan-Present, Ms. Wetzel-Present, Chair Mr. Lipsett-Present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Cormier made a motion to approve the 3.26.24 SC Minutes.

The motion was seconded, all in favor. The motion passed 7-0.

Ms. Cormier made a motion to approve the 3.27.24 SC Minutes.

The motion was seconded, all in favor. The motion passed 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rachel Kuberry, Hurd Wyman parent.

She remains concerned about the timeline for our redistrict.

Every other district she looked at took well over a year and sometimes a decade to get to implementing a full redistrict; including our neighboring towns, Stoneham and Lexington. Ms. Kuberry would like to see the goals of the redistrict published and shared with the public. The COVID-19 pandemic affected at least half of the families in question. The committee is responsible for finding the solution that provides the greatest improvement while causing the least amount of change. We could phase in the redistricting, as many surrounding towns have done. Fixing the middle school lines was not a priority in the previous redistricting discussions. Ms. Kuberry cautions against including this as a major priority now given the abridged timeline that we face. She asked the committee to create and share priorities or criteria that they will use to evaluate the proposed new district maps. Better yet, include the community's voice in developing these priorities. In these priorities, Ms. Kuberry wants to see geography closely considered. Walking to and from school is a critical part of the family routine. Being close to your school builds independence for students. This is true of elementary students and middle school students alike. Ms. Kuberry is looking forward to seeing what the committee identifies and hopes they include geography, demographics, transportation, community impact, cost savings, and more. Ms. Kuberry does not believe a plan that causes major changes for everyone is appropriate or necessary. She wants the committee to bring the community on board for this process. She asked the committee to recognize that the timeline may be too short and to start discussions around a phase in redistricting.

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

City Councilor Charles Viola was attending another meeting.

REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS OF SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF

Vote on the Last Day of School

Dr. Crowley needed the committee to vote on the last day of school and told them that June 20, 2024, will be the last day for students and staff. It is an early release day.

Ms. Cormier made a motion to approve June 20, 2024, as the last day of school. The motion was seconded, all in favor. The motion passed 7-0.

Dr. Crowley said the first day back for staff is Tuesday, September 3, 2024 and the first day back for students is Thursday, September 5, 2024.

FY 25 Update

FY 2025 Budget Presentation

Dr. Crowley began by saying there have been many meetings with the Finance subcommittee and many conversations with Mayor Concannon, City Auditor Charles Doherty, and members of the Leadership team.

The budget is aligned to our Strategic Plan.

Last year we passed a budget of \$78.9 million, and then we added \$1.1 million to salaries because of various factors. The numbers in Woburn change every day. Since the last school committee meeting we have added 13 new kids. We are cognizant of that, so we are not adding positions in September or October, but having the staff we need when we open our doors.

The starting point for this year's budget was \$80,065,492.

The FY 25 Proposed Budget is \$90,7843,679 which is a 13.39% increase from last year.

At the last school committee meeting, we were at a 16.9% increase.

Dr. Crowley walked through some of the changes that were made since the last meeting.

Salary Increases are approximately 39% of the budget. They would like to add 16 FTE to the budget.

The ESSER money went away, and that amount was \$1.7 million.

Our Special Education line items continue to increase, and they include the ESY program, Out of District, and those types of needs for our kids. Special Education transportation has gone up; it is approximately a \$4 million line item. Electricity has gone up, that is a \$2 million line item. Homeless transportation has increased as the number of students who require homeless transportation is higher than it has ever been.

Dr. Crowley went over some challenges.

The enrollment number has gone up since the last school committee meeting. There are 4526 students and we had 4513 at the last meeting. The EL number went from 14.6% to 14.8% since the last meeting. Things are happening in real-time. In 2020, we had 44.5% of students who were high needs. As a district, as of October 1, 2023, we are at 56.3% high needs. Our high-needs population is composed of economically disadvantaged students, ML population, and our special education population. All of these create our high needs population.

Mr. DiZio went over the FY 25 Budget Components.

He told the committee that one thing that remains constant from the changes from the last budget is that more than 75% of the current proposed budget is salary driven. Another 18% is made up of contractual obligations, such as transportation, utilities, and out-of-district. The big takeaway is only about 7% is left over for supplies and other operations costs. There isn't much room to play around here.

This is a tight budget and everything in there are things that we need.

Mr. DiZio talked about the budget changes they made since the last school committee meeting. All of these changes were made to get down to the 13.39% increase.

BUDGET CHANGE	% SAVINGS
City taking back \$1.8M in OOD	1.92%
Reduce by 1 vacant custodian	0.60%
Redistricting (estimate)	0.53%
Delay additions of building subs	0.50%
OOD tuitions	0.27%
Reduce Masters 5 Vacancies to Masters 3	0.19%
Move 2 ML coaches to grant	0.14%
Move assistant principal to grant	0.12%
Move family liaison to grant	0.04%

Ms. Young gave an update on these budget changes.

The assistant principal is at Reeves. Last year, the position was in the preschool revolving account. Some of this we will eventually have to move back into the budget, but we are able to have it remain in the preschool revolving account for next year.

The Masters 5 Vacancies to Masters 3; does not touch the positions that we know we could not hire at a Masters 3. These are positions they felt comfortable reducing to a 3.

In terms of the out-of-district, Ms. Ryan did a nice job working with the city auditor for that.

For the vacant custodian position, there were many vacant custodian positions across the district and looking overall at positions.

The building subs; in the budget, there were 2 requests for building subs. One was for Goodyear and the other for Malcolm White. We are not taking them away, but there seems to not be a need for them in the fall. We would use our substitute line instead.

The ML coaches would be moved to a grant for this one year and would have to be put back into the budget next year as this newly arrived grant goes away.

Dr. Crowley commented on the 13.39% they arrived at. The biggest driver is the \$1.8M that Ms. Ryan and the city worked together on.

Ms. Cormier asked which grant the assistant principal at the Reeves will be paid out of.

Ms. Young said it is the preschool revolving account for this school year, and they are comfortable moving it back into the budget for next school year.

Mr. Mulrenan said he is happy to see the city taking back the 1.8M. He asked about the vacant custodian position,

Dr. Crowley told him there are multiple custodian vacancies due to custodians retiring. The elementary schools were brought up as potentially sharing a custodian if they needed to. That is a cost savings of \$60,000.

Mr. Mulrenan hopes the custodian union will be informed that this is happening. He commented that getting to where we are from two weeks ago is a move in the right direction,

Ms. Wetzel asked what the difference is between a Masters 5 and a Masters 3.

Mr. DiZio said it is around \$7,100.00

Ms. Wetzel asked about the cost of a building sub compared to a daily substitute.

Dr. Crowley said it is the same as they both are paid a daily rate. Going this way allows more flexibility. They started looking at this at the beginning of the year.

Ms. Wetzel commented that the high needs population percentage of 56.3% puts additional stress on staff and asked the administration to keep an eye on that to make sure we can accommodate the high needs percentage.

Ms. Crowley asked about the co-teachers at kindergarten.

Ms Young said we have 2 FELLOWS that serve in that role at Goodyear and Malcolm White.

We have a lot of students who leave our preschool program and are in a more resource setting. It is difficult to get FELLOWS, and we will be moving those two positions into the budget.

Ms. Young said we place from all elementary schools if they feel a student needs more time in a co-taught room.

Ms. Crowley is happy to fund this. She asked if they were SpEd Certified.

Ms. Young said yes.

FY 25 Proposed Budget — Other Considerations

User Fees (Athletics)

Transportation Fees

Early Retirement

Redistricting

Mr. DiZio said the city is open to potentially this one-time early retirement incentive. Those numbers will make more sense as we move along in the process.

Dr. Crowley said as of the last meeting that 17 staff members put in for retirement. We don't know how many people will put in for early retirement.

Mr. DiZio commented there would likely be more in addition to that 17.

Mrs. Chisholm, on early retirement, asked if they had spoken to the union about the date.

Dr. Crowley is in conversation with the union.

Ms. Crowley said we might get a better picture of looking at transportation when the redistricting is done.

Dr. Crowley is trying to push information out to people in real-time.

McKibben Demographics; we have submitted all of our data to them. This company has worked with many Massachusetts communities and also nationally. There is a meeting tomorrow. Dr. Crowley is making sure we are moving forward. This is moving very quickly.

Dr. Crowley will tell the committee what they know as soon as they possibly can.

McKibben will geocode everybody in the city, take a look at the demographics and where they live, and draw lines to keep everything in balance. This information will be given to the committee. There will be an expense to redistricting, too. This is in real-time. We are comfortable, and they are saying they have everything they need and can finish this in our timeline. They have plans to give us different scenarios.

Ms. Wetzel had a question about the McKibben parameters that were sent to them.

Dr. Crowley said they gave them the number of every classroom we have in every building, the special education programming that we have in our buildings, the contractual size, our student information, and the feasibility study.

Ms. Wetzel suggested sending something out to the community with why and when we're doing this. This is the question people in our community are asking her,

Ms. Cormier said they sent the contractual size to them, what numbers were provided.

Dr. Crowley said at the elementary levels 25 and 26 students per classroom; they shoot for 90% capacity in the redistrict to allow for some flexibility.

Ms. Young told the committee we are providing the number of rooms, the programs we have, and the student numbers we have. They are looking at all of these buildings as a district then we give them our current lines. They said when you go above 90% is when you run out of room in a building.

Ms. Crowley said her notes reflected it was between 80% and 90% for capacity.

Ms. Young said it is 90%.

Chair Mr. Lipsett said they would be coming back with different options.

Dr. Crowley is meeting with McKibben tomorrow.

Ms. Crowley said the main thing is the superintendent had made the first step and hired them to take a look at redistricting and present a few scenarios and a reminder of student safety in the buildings and there might not be room in the buildings next year. Getting a solution that is sustainable for 10 years.

Ms. Wetzel would like to continue the community updates we have been doing. It is important to make sure we are over-communicating. Not everyone reads newsletters or has a computer at home.

Chair Mr. Lipsett will look at ways to communicate.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Personnel Subcommittee

Mrs. Chisholm said they met on 4.8.24.

The Admin team will be meeting with the Mayor tomorrow. A request for them to take over utilities and transportation on behalf of the school committee, and that would get us to 10.5%.

Mrs. Chisholm made a motion for the city to take over the homeless transportation and utilities.

The motion was seconded, all in favor. The motion passed 7-0.

Community Relations Subcommittee

Mr. Austin said they had not met.

Curriculum and Data Trends Subcommittee

Mr. Mulrenan said they had not met.

Ms. Young went over the Literacy Night dates. Thursday, April 11th; Goodyear and Shamrock Literacy Night.

Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Cormier said they will be meeting on April 26th to discuss the pending dress code policy. They completed the Technology update with Ms. Judkins and will be reviewing that. She and Mr. Wyman have been discussing the FMLA policy. Ms. Rania Caldwell will be discussing translation and interpretation.

Resources & Capital Planning Subcommittee

Ms. Crowley said they met on 4/3/24. The minutes were discussed earlier and converted into the Superintendent's update; which went out to the entire school community.

Student Services & Achievement Subcommittee

Ms. Wetzel said they had not met. Tomorrow at 6:00 pm at WMHS there will be a presentation on the new IEP. If you are not able to attend, this will be recorded.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Mr. Lipsett received a variety of emails on redistricting, and they have been forwarded to committee members.

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion for those emails to become part of the permanent record. The motion was seconded, all in favor. The motion passed 7-0.

Chair Mr. Lipsett said we are coming up to a deadline of May 1st to submit the budget. He would like to schedule a public hearing around April 30th.

Ms. Cormier made a motion to schedule the public hearing on the budget for Tuesday, April 30th at 7:00 pm.

The motion was seconded, all in favor. The motion passed 7-0.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The second week of May (the date is still being finalized) all incoming kindergarten students will meet at the high school at @6:00 pm. Welcome to Kindergarten. That information will be put out at the end of this week.

Tannerfest — K -12 Celebration of the Arts will be held on April 27th.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Chisholm made a motion to adjourn.

The motion was seconded, all in favor. The motion passed 7-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean MacLeod

Jean MacLeod

Recording Secretary

