

WEST BOYLSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, March 13, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.
Middle/High School Media Center – Library
Along with live stream @ <https://youtube.com/@wblive125>

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

James Pedone, Jr. Chairman
Jason Ponticelli, Vice Chairman
Jennifer Breen
Nancy Hubbard
Emily Lehman Miller

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT

Richard A. Meagher, Superintendent of Schools
Christopher Fournier, Principal Middle/High School
Alex Audette, Principal Elementary School
Cristy Morrison, Business Administrator

ADMINISTRATORS NOT PRESENT

Sherri Traina, Director of Special Education

ALSO PRESENT

Faculty and audience.

Mr. Pedone called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Acknowledgement of Recording Secretary

Mr. Pedone acknowledged Ms. Pratt, the recording secretary, Mr. Bokankowitz, the district IT Coordinator, and the West Boylston Public Access channel for being present at the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Ponticelli made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting from February 14, 2024, seconded by Ms. Breen.

VOTE 5-0-0

3. Student Recognition Awards: Major Edwards, Middle School, High School

Students from the Elementary School, Middle School and High School were recognized as Student of the month: Christine Anand, and Jack Smith. The Elementary School Student of the month, Anika Kapisiris was unable to attend this month's meeting and will be recognized at April's School Committee meeting.

4. Student Advisory Council Representative

Student Advisory Council Member Anabelle Anand reported on:

- A Cappella – Successful carnation fundraiser for Valentine's Day. Open Mic Night, March 29th.
- GSA – Successful carnation fundraiser for Valentine's Day! Crochet fundraiser on April 25th. Planning on a hosting a joint GSA event with a local GSA club.

- HS Student Council –Spring Spirit Week in March and Spring Semi-Formal Dance on March 15th. Clothing Drive March 4th to March 22nd. Along with Play Comps April 1, 2 and 3rd.
- HS Yearbook – Picture update.
- Interact Club – Sponsoring Spirt Week. Participating Meal Event with Rise Against Hunger at Nashoba High School at the end of the month. The club is starting to plan spring events; one possibility is a charity walk, “In It to End It”.
- International Thespian Society – Preparing to invite new members into the ITS. Invitations will be sent to eligible students this month.
- MHS Jazz Band – Will host Open Mic Night on March 29th and looking for new members.
- National Art Honor Society – NAHS has welcomed 18 new members. The induction ceremony will be held on April 24th. Also getting ready for their trip to North Adams.
- Ski and Snowboard Club – Due to snow days, our final two weeks ended in March. The group had some great spring skiing conditions and fun on the mountain.
- Tri-M Music Honor Society – Currently preparing for Open Mic Night on March 29th. Annabelle Anand led another successful community karaoke night at the Beaman Library.
- Volleyball Club – We will begin using the gym once spring sports have begun, March 18th. If the weather is too harsh then we will move down to the weight room for conditioning.
- Freshman Class – The freshman class had a Dodgeball Tournament on March 12th. The class is also working on their first play competition.
- Sophomores – The sophomores will hold a Trivia Night on March 21st. They are also getting ready for the upcoming Plant Sale in May. Also beginning their planning for their Junior prom.
- Junior Class – The junior class is preparing for prom.

5. Highlight on Schools: Champions Before and After School Program Presentation – Cialyn Ricardi

Ms. Ricardi presented the Champions Before and After School Program Presentation to the School Committee.

Mr. Ponticelli asked Ms. Ricardi: “How early does the program open and close?”

Ms. Ricardi replied to Mr. Ponticelli: Our programs starts at 6:30am and closes at 6pm. These times are pretty standard for a majority of our programs. I do have a few programs that close at 7pm.

6. Community Input - None

7. Vote to approve FY24 Student Opportunity Act Grant Submission

Mr. Meagher presented the FY24 Student Opportunity Act Grant information to the School Committee.

Ms. Breen made a motion to approve the FY24 Student Opportunity Act Grant submission, seconded by Ms. Lehman Miller.

VOTE 5-0-0

8. School Choice Recommendations

Mr. Meagher presented the School Choice recommendations to the School Committee. During the School Choice Recommendation presentation he did review each grades he would like to recommend for school choice next year along with the grades that he was not recommending. Mr. Meagher shared with the School Committee we currently have 119 School Choice Students enrolled throughout the district. That gives the projected revenue for the district \$819,000.

Ms. Breen asked Mr. Meagher along with addressing the School Committee: Before we vote on the School Choice recommendations. Can I just ask? Grade 6 we are only at 68 and we know we will lose kids to St.

John's, St. Paul's, Notre Dame. Is there any consideration to possibly open spots for grades 6 and grades 7? I look at next year's senior class and how small they are and I think it will be beneficial to get them in here in middle school and have them here so when high school comes they decide they are established here. Sixty-eight to me seems a little low and if we loss 10 out of that grade going into 9th grade, which is normal, we are down to 58. Can we make consideration for spots for grades 6 and 7?

Mr. Pedone responded to Ms. Breen: I agree with Ms. Breen's recommendations for grades 6 and 7. Not to exceed 80. To clarify, we would only open up a few seats in 4th grade?

Mr. Meagher responded to Mr. Pedone: Yes that is correct.

Ms. Lehman Miller asked the School Committee: Just for historical reference, what are the max numbers in the middle high?

Mr. Pedone replied to Ms. Lehman Miller: We would like to do that all the way through however, we tend to lose them in high school to vocational or private school. So if we get into the 80 number we lose a few, we bring a few in. We would like to stay away from the 47 number.

Mr. Ponticelli made a motion to approve the FY25 School Choice Recommendations with the modification of adding seats for grades 6 and 7, seconded by Ms. Hubbard.

VOTE 5-0-0

9. Warrants

Mr. Ponticelli made a motion of the approval of the Payables Warrants dated February 26, 2024 and March 11, 2024, seconded by Ms. Hubbard.

VOTE 5-0-0

Ms. Lehman Miller made a motion of the approval of the Payroll Warrants dated February 16, 2024 and March 1, 2024, seconded by Ms. Breen.

VOTE 5-0-0

10. Subcommittee Reports

- Budget and Capital Planning Subcommittee – Mr. Pedone shared with the School Committee that the Budget and Capital Planning Subcommittee met and discussed the committee met to go over the final budget numbers that were going to be presented. Also the committee spoke about the Statement of Interest that was submitted today and we expect to hear something back in August.

11. Communication and Reports

- a. Major Edwards Elementary School Principal Mr. Audette reported on:
 - Grades 3-5 MCAS testing prep month of March
 - Professional Development Day, March 13th
 - Teacher training on ELLevation
 - Teacher/Paraprofessional training protocols for proctoring MCAS
 - Committees met for final preparations for STEM Night and Arts Night
 - Major Edwards Elementary School issued Report Cards, March 13th
 - Power Squad Energy Academy; March 15th
 - Spring Picture Day, March 19th

- PTA Meeting, March 20th
 - STEM Night, March 27th (4:30pm-6pm)
 - School-Wide Community Meeting, March 27th
 - Major Edwards Drama Club Performance, April 4th
- b. Middle High School Principal Mr. Fournier reported on:
- High School Course Selection for 2024-2025 school year update
 - Spring Semi-Formal Dance, March 15th
 - Student Council trip to Hyannis, MASC Conference
 - Girls' Varsity Basketball Team updates
 - Middle/High School Rally, March 15th
 - Student Council Clothing Drive, March 4th to March 22nd
 - Student Council Sponsored Spirt Week, March 11 to March 15th
 - Student Council Sponsored Dodgeball Tournament, March 12th
 - Class of 2026 sponsoring annual Trivia Night, March 21st at the West Boylston Senior Center
- c. Director of Special Education Ms. Traina: Not present
- d. Business Administrator Ms. Morrison reported on:
- February 2024 Expense Report
- e. Superintendent of Schools Mr. Meagher reported on:
- Food Service updates
 - Staffing updates
 - Training
- f. School Committee
- First reading and approval of Policy JICFB – Bullying Prevention.

Ms. Breen made a motion to approve the first reading of Policy JICFB- Bullying Prevention, seconded by Ms. Lehman Miller.

VOTE 5-0-0

Mr. Ponticelli asked to Mr. Meagher and the School Committee: There's mention of an anonymous reporting system. Is there any indication of how that works, who receives that, does it go directly to the buildings?

Mr. Meagher replied to Mr. Ponticelli: I received a copy of that. As do the respective principals whatever building it's reported to. It's immediate, it's screened, and sometimes they take a lot of investigation. Sometimes they are pranks from time to time.

Mr. Podone asked Mr. Meagher: What's the mechanism that keeps it anonymous?

Mr. Bokankowitz – Our web host, IES Central, they have a bullying plug in (basically). All the reports go into them. There are three different schools/locations that to go into, via district wide or each building. Mr. Meagher receives all reports. For example if a report is sent to the elementary school, Mr. Meagher gets an email and the Bullying Group at Major Edwards gets it. If a report goes to the middle high school, Mr. Meagher gets the email and the Bullying Group at the middle high school gets it. What makes it anonymous is our web host puts it together and sends it in an email. All we see is our web host. We only see the email, we don't see names and we don't see IP addresses because it's all from our web host.

- Vote to accept the transfer of golf cart from West Boylston Parks and Recreation to West Boylston Public Schools.

Ms. Lehman Miller made a motion to accept the transfer of the golf cart from West Boylston Parks and Recreation to West Boylston Public Schools, seconded by Mr. Ponticelli.

VOTE 5-0-0

12. Executive Session to conduct non-union Personnel discussion and not to return to open session.

Mr. Ponticelli made a motion to go into Executive Session to conduct non-union personnel discussions, and the School Committee will not return to open session and will adjourn the meeting from Executive Session, Ms. Breen seconded at 7:48pm.

A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Hubbard – Yes

Mr. Ponticelli – Yes

Ms. Breen – Yes

Ms. Lehman Miller – Yes

Mr. Pedone – Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Pratt, Recording Secretary