

**WATERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
WATERTOWN, MA**

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

**MONDAY  
DECEMBER 4, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**I. Roll Call**

The School Committee Chairman, Mr. John Portz, called to order the December 4, 2017 meeting of the School Committee at 7:00 PM. Present were School Committee members Ms. Kendra Foley, Ms. Eileen Hsü-Balzer, Ms. Lindsay Mosca, Mr. Mark Sideris, and Ms. Elizabeth Yusem. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Deanne Galdston, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Dr. Theresa B. McGuinness, Assistant Superintendent for 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.

School Committee member Dr. Guido Guidotti was not in attendance.

**II. Recognition of Fall Athletic Teams**

Mr. Michael Lahiff, Director of Athletics, acknowledged the Watertown Public Schools' fall 2017 athletics teams and athletes, including the boys' soccer team, the football team, the field hockey team, the girls' basketball team.

**III. High School Student Advisors**

Miss Lauren Petrillo, student advisor to the School Committee, reported on recent goings-on at Watertown High School. She said the winter concert was scheduled for December 6, 2017, parent conferences were in progress, and try-outs for the spring musical *Pippin* were underway.

**IV. Teaching and Learning Showcase**

**A. Fine and Performing Arts (FAPA)**

Mr. Frederik Schuetze, Watertown High School music teacher, introduced students Mr. Alexander Feltner Harrison and Mr. Julian Skepis who performed a Handel sonata for the School Committee.

Ms. Magen Slesinger, Coordinator of Fine and Performing Arts, gave a presentation on the fine, applied, and performing arts in Watertown Public Schools. She said that the arts teach beauty, expression, and new ways of perception – all things that enhance students' learning in other capacities. Many kinds of art classes – including drama, choir, instrument/band, and visual arts – were said to be offered across all grade levels.

**V. Public Forum – Session I**

A member of the public said that she had many questions about proposed short-term fixes for the issues facing the athletics fields, such as how the proposed 6:30 PM practice end time was determined.

A member of the public requested the School Committee delay their scheduled votes on the athletics fields in order to reexamine, further discuss, and then solve the issues facing the athletics fields.

A member of the public said he is vehemently opposed to the use of artificial turf on athletics fields.

**VI. Presentation and Discussion**

**A. MCAS – Elementary Schools**

Dr. Theresa B. McGuinness presented a [memo](#) and reported on the [2017 MCAS data](#) from Watertown's elementary schools. The principals Ms. Mena Ciarlone of Cunniff Elementary School, Ms. Stacy Phelan of J.R. Lowell Elementary School, and Mr. Robert LaRoche of Hosmer Elementary

School reported on their schools' MCAS scores and action plans for student learning goals. Dr. McGuinness said that because Legacy MCAS, PARCC, and MCAS 2.0 are all different assessments and are reported differently, there could not be a year-to-year assessment analysis as it would be impossible to make comparisons of the three unique tests. She said that the District had begun to focus on evidence of student impact in professional learning teams (PLTs) as teams of educators select a problem of practice, design a SMART goal around it, then measure student impact after having implemented a new strategy. From the newest MCAS data, principals, coordinators, and teachers had fashioned new student learning goals.

Dr. McGuinness presented a [strategic three-year improvement and professional development plan](#) for the elementary schools, updated in December 2017 based on the most recent MCAS data.

The principals noted they are working closely together with the Central Office to streamline and calibrate curriculum and professional development to help level student performance across all three elementary schools.

## **VII. Action Items – Discussion and Vote**

### **A. FY19 Budget Goals**

#### **1. From Budget & Finance Subcommittee**

Dr. Galdston presented [FY19 budget goals](#) to the School Committee. The goals were said to be to support educators' instructional practice to meet the needs of all students, to create systems of support to achieve the District's strategic objectives, and to ensure that existing programs and initiatives continue to the point of being sustainable well into the future.

A motion was made to approve the FY19 budget goals.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

### **B. School Committee Protocols**

The Chairman presented a draft of [School Committee protocols](#). Mr. Portz said that the three proposed principles of the School Committee were to:

- Support the educational mission of the district and the well-being of all students
- Demonstrate professional and collegial relations with one another
- Dedicate ourselves to establishing and maintaining effective communication

Two School Committee members said she would like to better understand the protocols in relation to social media expression.

A motion was made to refer the School Committee protocols to subcommittee.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

### **C. Motion Related to Use of Athletic Fields**

The Chairman noted that the athletics fields in Watertown are property of the Town rather than the school department.

Ms. Kendra Foley, Chair of the Athletics Subcommittee, said that student athletic practices ended between 7:00 PM and 9:00 PM more than 60% of the time in September and October, the two months she studied. She said, "Our student athletes deserve the opportunity to practice after school, eat dinner with their families, complete homework, and go to sleep." She said the ultimate goals were for athletes to complete practices by 6:30 PM and to ensure adequate quality field space to meet the needs of each sport.

A motion was made to table to Athletics Subcommittee's request that the Town of Watertown, for the 2018-2019 academic year, allow the football program to practice on the oval at Victory Field and build a varsity baseball field at Filipello Grove for the baseball program.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

A motion was made to amend the Athletics Subcommittee's motion requesting that the Town of Watertown address current athletic field constraints to enable student athletes to complete practice by 6:30 PM to instead say "request that the Town of Watertown address current athletic field constraints for both the 2018-2019 academic year and beyond to enable student athletes to complete practice by 6:30 PM."

A roll call vote was taken.

Hsü-Balzer: Present

Yusem: Yes

Foley: Yes

Mosca: Yes

Sideris: Present

Portz: Yes

The motion passed by a vote of 4 yes to 2 present.

A motion was made to request that the Town of Watertown address current athletic field constraints for both the 2018-2019 academic year and beyond to enable student athletes to complete practice by 6:30 PM.

The motion was seconded.

A School Committee member thanked the community and his fellow members for addressing the issues around the athletic practices but noted his concern that he had not yet seen a schedule that would allow all students to complete practices by 6:30 PM, especially with the later school start times effective in fall of 2018. He proposed that the School Committee and the Town Council begin conversations together with the community and said, as of this time, he would not be supporting the motion.

A School Committee member asked if the teams ever practice on weekends; the response was that they do on occasion. She asked if the desired schedule of school, to practice, to dinner, to homework could be less rigid to allow for better flexibility. Another School Committee member said that she would prefer student athletes have the same schedule every day. Another School Committee member said she would be willing to consider other times than 6:30 PM if that was a "sticking point" for other members or the Town Council.

The Chairman said that he viewed the motion as merely a recommendation to the Town Council to examine the field use.

A School Committee member said she would like to amend or substitute the motion to reflect that a conversation is needed between the School Committee and the Town to begin to address the state of athletic field use by the schools.

A School Committee member said that a solution, whether short- or long-term, should be addressed quickly as the 2018-2019 school calendar would be created soon.

A motion was made to request that a conversation begin between the School Committee and the Town of Watertown to begin to address the current state of athletic field use by the schools in the 2018-2019 academic year and beyond.

The motion was seconded.

A School Committee member cautioned that municipal government works slowly and this motion could mislead the public into thinking the field use issue would be solved in time for the 2018-2019 school calendar creation. A School Committee member responded that as an advocate for students,

she would prefer the motion kept the reference to the 2018-2019 academic year.

A roll call vote was taken.

Yusem: Yes

Foley: Yes

Mosca: Yes

Sideris: No

Hsü-Balzer: No

Portz: Yes

The motion passed by a vote of 4 yes to 2 no.

**D. Approval of Gifts:**

1. \$25.00 from Anthony and Beatrix Kastor for the Watertown Family Network
2. \$100.00 from Roy and Patricia Erhart Mottahedeh for the Watertown Family Network

A motion was made to accept the gifts listed above.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

**VIII. Reports**

**A. WPS Projects and Activities:**

**1. Budget & Finance**

Mr. John Portz [reported](#) on the November 28, 2017 meeting of the Budget & Finance Subcommittee.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the November 27, 2017 Budget and Finance Subcommittee.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

**2. Athletics**

Ms. Kendra Foley, Chair of the Athletics Subcommittee, on the November 28, 2017 of the Athletics Subcommittee with particular regards to the athletic field usage and athletics banners recognizing individual athletes.

**B. WPS Projects and Activities**

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

Dr. Galdston reported that Ai3 was the architect chosen for the elementary schools' schematic design; she was hopeful the Town would choose to appropriate on December 12, 2017. She said that visioning for the new or refurbished elementary schools would likely be complete by late summer or early fall of 2018. She said that a December 18, 2017 meeting of the School Committee would include the Ai3 architects.

The Superintendent said the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) would determine whether Watertown High School is accepted into the eligibility period by December 13, 2017.

**2. Asbestos Abatement Project**

Ms. Mary DeLai, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, provided an update on the asbestos abatement project at Watertown High School. She said abatement work began on November 28, 2017 and was expected to be completed within three months.

**3. Planning for New School Start Times in Fall 2018**

The Superintendent said the District was considering three areas impacted by the different start times beginning in 2018, including transportation changes, before- and after-school programmatic changes, and itinerant staff changes.

**4. Student Activities**

Ms. DeLai reported that all student activities accounts in the District are highly regulated and regularly audited.

**C. Monthly Updates:**

**1. FY18 Budget**

Ms. Mary DeLai, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, reported on the [status](#) of the FY18 budget. She said that the report showed a current unencumbered balance of

\$2,739,962 or 6.0% of the original adopted budget. The current unencumbered balance was said to have been reduced by \$414,896 since the last month's report.

**2. Enrollment**

Dr. Galdston provided the School Committee with updated [student enrollment](#) figures. Overall the District's student enrollment figures had remained largely steady, increasing by two students from 2,658 to 2,660 over the month prior.

**3. Personnel**

Mr. Craig Hardimon, Director of Human Resources, reported on recent [personnel actions](#) in the District.

**4. Warrants**

The Chairman presented report on the District's [warrants](#).

**IX. Public Forum – Session II**

A member of the public said that many School Committee and Subcommittee meeting minutes are not available online.

**X. Reports**

**A. Chairman's**

Mr. Portz reported he would shortly begin asking the School Committee about their preferred 2018 subcommittee assignment preferences.

**B. Superintendent's**

Dr. Galdston reported she looked forward to the first meeting of her new Strategy Team. She said that she was excited for the District's "Building for the Future" initiative to continue its work towards improved school facilities. She invited the public to her monthly Superintendent's Coffee meeting on December 20, 2017 at 9:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

**XI. Next Meeting**

The next School Committee meeting was announced to be scheduled for December 18, 2017.

**XII. New Business**

A School Committee member asked to refer to the Policy Subcommittee the issue of the recognition of individual student athletes, such as the recognition of championship teams on school banners. The School Committee member asked to have meeting agendas linked to supporting documents upon posting.

**XIII. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 PM.

**Meeting Documents:**

[MCAS - Elementary Schools](#)

[Memo - MCAS](#)

[3 Year Elementary Improvement Plan](#)

[FY19 Budget Goals](#)

[School Committee Protocols Draft](#)

[Budget and Finance Subcommittee Report](#)

[FY18 Budget Memo](#)

[Enrollment Report](#)

[Personnel Report](#)

[Warrants Report](#)