

**WATERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
WATERTOWN, MA**

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

**MONDAY  
JANUARY 8, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**I. Roll Call**

The School Committee Chairman, Mr. John Portz, called to order the January 8, 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, and Ms. Lindsay Mosca. Also present were School Committee members-elect Ms. Lily Rayman-Read and Ms. Amy Donhue. 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.

**II. Annual School Committee Reorganization**

**A. Election of Officers**

A motion was made to appoint Mr. John Portz as Chair of the School Committee for 2018.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made to appoint Ms. Kendra Foley as Vice-Chair of the School Committee for 2018.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made to appoint Ms. Amy Donohue as Secretary of the School Committee for 2018.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

**B. Subcommittee Assignments**

Mr. John Portz, Chairman, presented a list of the recommended subcommittee assignments for 2018 as follows:

*Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee*

Lily Read, Chair

Amy Donohue, Member

Eileen Hsu-Balzer, Member

*Budget and Finance Subcommittee*

Kendra Foley, Chair

Lindsay Mosca, Member

John Portz, Member

*Policy Subcommittee*

Eileen Hsu-Balzer, Chair

Amy Donohue, Member

Lindsay Mosca, Member

*Athletics Subcommittee*

Amy Donohue, Chair

Lily Rayman-Read, Member

Kendra Foley, Member

*Curriculum Subcommittee*  
Lindsay Mosca, Chair  
Lily Rayman-Read, Member  
Eileen Hsu-Balzer, Member

A motion was made to approve the subcommittees for 2018 as listed above.  
The motion was seconded.  
The motion passed unanimously.

### **III. 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. It was said that students were preparing for midterms. Miss Koufos thanked the English Department for helping students with editing reports and papers. Miss Petrillo and Miss Koufos said that some students would be volunteering at Camp Sunshine over February break. Some juniors and seniors were preparing to go to Italy for an educational trip.

### **IV. Public Forum – Session I**

A member of the public suggested improvements to the navigation of the School Committee website, with particular attention to meeting agendas and supporting documents.

### **V. Presentations and Discussion**

#### **A. Updates from Watertown Cable Access Corporation on Improvements Related to WPS**

Ms. Helen Chatel, Executive Director of Watertown Cable Access Corporation (WCA-TV), gave a [presentation](#) on the broadcast station and its improvements related to the Watertown Public Schools. She said that all schools are equipped with camera kits for filming. In recent months, live broadcasts from the high school gymnasium and auditorium had become possible. Upcoming projects include the installation of robotic cameras with live-broadcast capability in the high school lecture hall and the replacement of WCA-TV's studio cameras, with the other equipment being donated to the middle school for their production uses.

#### **B. Superintendent's Report on Entry Plan**

Dr. Deanne Galdston, Superintendent of Schools, presented a [report](#) on her entry plan into the District which had recently concluded. The report may be viewed by clicking the hyperlink above.

The Chairman and some School Committee members expressed their thanks for Dr. Galdston's information-packed, thoughtfully-prepared report. The Chairman said he thought the creation of a Strategy Development Team and a Marketing & Communications Team would be of particular importance going forward. The Superintendent said that she and the Cabinet would be spending more time in classrooms in the near future and beyond, with principal-led school visits already scheduled for the coming days.

Multiple School Committee members expressed interest in the implementation of universal PSATs. Dr. McGuinness said that there was an upcoming Professional Development course intended to train teachers in preparing their students for the SAT and ACT.

#### **C. Superintendent's Mid-Year Status Report on FY18 Goals**

Dr. Deanne Galdston, Superintendent of Schools, presented a [mid-year status report](#) on her Fiscal Year 2018 goals. The vast majority of the goals were said to be on target for timely completion or already complete. The full report may be accessed by clicking the hyperlink above.

**D. First Reading of Policy Changes:**

1. [JB Equal Educational Opportunities](#)
2. [JBA Student-to-Student Harassment/Bullying](#)
3. [JIC Student Conduct](#)
4. [JJ/JJI Extracurricular Activities](#)
5. [JKAA Prevention of Restraint of Students](#)
6. [JKD/JKE Expulsion and Suspension Policy](#)
7. [IHBEA English Language Learners](#)
8. [IHBF Homebound Instruction](#)
9. [IHBG Home Schooling](#)
10. [KF Building Use](#)

The Chairman said that the District had recently hired an attorney to review the District's Policy Manual to ensure its compliance with current Massachusetts state laws. The attorney had returned the manual with suggested changes.

Ms. Eileen Hsu-Balzer, Chair of the Policy Subcommittee, said that it was suggested that many of the policies be updated to include the term "gender identity." It was suggested that some of the policies adopt language to match existing state laws. For others, it was suggested the term "parent" was replaced with "parent/guardian." All proposed policy amendments may be viewed by clicking the hyperlink above. Ms. Hsu-Balzer said members of the community were welcome to attend an upcoming Policy Subcommittee meeting to provide input into the policy changes.

The Chairman noted these policies would be voted upon after a revisit to the Policy Subcommittee and a second reading at the next monthly School Committee meeting scheduled for February 5, 2018.

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

**A. FY19 Capital Budget**

Ms. Mary DeLai, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, reported on the [FY19-23 capital budget](#). Ms. DeLai said the plan had been presented to and vetted by the Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee, the Town Manager, and the Town Auditor.

Some School Committee members noted that some of the planned improvements to the Phillips building (30 Common Street) seemed expensive for a building whose ultimate fate remains unknown. Ms. Lori Kabel, Director of Public Buildings, said the Phillips building will be used for approximately five more years or longer, so improvements to the HVAC system and the installation of an emergency generator would be funds well spent as the Phillips is the "hub" of Watertown Public Schools.

A motion was made to accept the FY19-23 capital plan.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

**B. Approval of Gifts:**

1. \$500.00 from the Residence Inn, Watertown for the Cunniff Kids News
2. \$500.00 from Watertown Savings Bank for the Cunniff Kids News
3. \$250.00 from the World in Watertown for Ms. Marion Lazan's Holocaust Presentation at Watertown High School
4. \$50.00 from Leuders Environmental, Inc. for Watertown Public Schools
5. A flute from Ms. Ellen Isenstein for the music program at Watertown High School
6. \$500.00 from Mr. Harry Trout for the Robotics Team at Watertown High School
7. \$1,000.00 from an anonymous donor for the Watertown Family Network

A motion was made to accept the above-listed gifts.  
The motion was seconded.  
The motion passed unanimously.

**C. Approval of Minutes:**

A School Committee member suggested all future School Committee meeting agendas be linked to supporting documents upon posting for increased transparency. The Chairman said he would work to make this a reality.

1. October 23, 2017 School Committee Meeting
2. October 30, 2017 School Committee Meeting
3. November 13, 2017 School Committee Meeting
4. December 18, 2017 School Committee Meeting

A motion was made to approve the above-listed minutes.  
The motion was seconded.  
The motion passed unanimously.

**VII. Reports**

**A. Subcommittees:**

**1. Buildings and Grounds**

A motion was made to accept the [minutes](#) of the Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee meeting on December 12, 2017.  
The motion was seconded.  
The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Policy**

A motion was made to accept the [minutes](#) of the Policy Subcommittee meeting on December 21, 2017.  
The motion was seconded.  
The motion passed unanimously.

**3. Athletics**

A motion was made to accept the [minutes](#) of the Athletics Subcommittee meeting held on November 28, 2017.  
The motion was seconded.  
The motion passed unanimously.

**B. WPS Projects and Activities:**

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

Mr. Portz reported that the Watertown Public Schools were moving forward to plan for the future of the school buildings and facilities. Visioning sessions, public forums, and planning meetings were said to be scheduled with the purpose of determining the District's best path towards schools equipped for 21<sup>st</sup>-century teaching and learning. Dr. Galdston said the District was quickly making strides towards more detailed planning for the future of the elementary schools. She said that the next steps for planning for a new or renovated high school could begin on April 2, 2018 when the MSBA would make necessary forms and paperwork available to the District.

Mr. Portz said a public forum with the School Committee gathering as a Committee of the Whole was scheduled for January 29, 2018 at 7:00 PM. Topics to be discussed would include the viability of the Lowell school site as a location for a new high school, desired student enrollment figures for each elementary school, and the location of preschool and pre-

kindergarten classes.

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

Ms. DeLai said that the asbestos abatement project at WHS was ahead of schedule and nearing completion with 37 rooms finalized and 18 to be completed in the next two weeks. She said that the art room would be the last to be completed, likely over February break as its project scope is larger than other rooms' and would require the removal of equipment and the use of a lift to reach the ceiling.

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

Dr. Galdston reported on planning for the new school start and dismissal times to begin in the fall of 2018. She said that the issue of busing would be closely examined in the coming weeks. Dr. Galdston said the District was examining and planning for before-school programs for students who will need to be dropped off earlier than the new school start times.

**C. Monthly Updates:**

**1. FY18 Budget**

Ms. DeLai presented the [FY18 budget status](#). She said the report showed that the District currently had an unencumbered balance of \$2,739,962 or 6.0% of the original adopted budget; the unencumbered balance had been reduced by \$414,896 since the last month's report.

**2. Enrollment**

The Superintendent reported on [student enrollment numbers](#) across the District. The overall student enrollment had decreased by 13 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.

**4. Warrants**

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

**VIII. Public Forum – Session II**

No member of the public spoke.

**IX. Reports**

**A. Chairman's**

The Chairman said he viewed the School Committee's power as one of collective leadership and he hoped to facilitate that leadership as Chairman for 2018. He invited honest critique by School Committee members.

**B. Superintendent's**

The Superintendent announced that Mr. Craig Hardimon, Director of Human Resources, would be retiring effective July 1, 2018.

Dr. Galdston invited the community to visit with her at a scheduled Superintendent's Coffee Meeting on Wednesday, January 17 at 9:00 AM and 7:00 PM in the Phillips building.

**X. Next Meeting**

Mr. Portz noted the next scheduled School Committee meetings were scheduled for January 29, 2017 and February 5, 2018.

## **XI. New Business**

A motion was made to refer to the Policy Subcommittee a discussion on recognition for individual athletes.  
The motion was seconded.  
The motion passed unanimously.

## **XII. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 PM.

Meeting Documents:

[WPS Superintendent's Entry Report 1/8/2018](#)

[Mid Cycle Review of Superintendent's Goals](#)

[Policy Changes - Memo and Drafts](#)

[FY19 Capital Budget Presentation](#)

[FY18 Budget Status](#)

[Enrollment Report](#)

[Personnel Report](#)

[Warrants Report](#)

[WCA-TV Presentation](#)

Minutes submitted by Christie Fisher, Administrative Assistant to the Central Office