

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
March 12, 2020

Call To Order

A. meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 8:01 AM at Case House by Mrs. Danielle Black, Vice Chair. Mrs. Black indicated that Mr. John Henry, Chair, was participating remotely. In attendance were Mr. Alex Cobb, Ms. Anita Raman, and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; and Ms. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Also in attendance were Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries; Ms. Laurie Melchionda, Director of Health Services; Ms. Wendy Diotalevi, Town of Weston Board of Health; and Mr. Chris Houston, Chair of the Weston Select Board.

Mrs. Black noted that the anticipated livestream was not working but said she would share and address emailed questions she received.

Coronavirus Discussion

Dr. Connolly updated the School Committee on the process to make the decision to close Weston Public Schools through Wednesday, March 18. In conversation with Ms. Melchionda and others, they came to the decision that it was the right thing going forward for all students and staff to close schools for 14 days. She indicated they followed all protocol, spoke with the State Department of Public Health and local Board of Health, had a conversation with the Associate Commissioner of Education, had discussion with the Director of Mass. Association of School Superintendents, and held a conference call with other area superintendents to discuss school plans. After conversation with Commissioner Riley, who recommended that Weston close only through March 18 at this time and wait until later in the day after a 4:30 conference call, to announce the decision to parents. Dr. Connolly indicated she had planned to notify parents at the end of school but waited per the Commissioner's request. She noted they would provide times for students and parents to come to the schools to gather important belongings.

Dr. Connolly, noting that communication would be ongoing, shared the plans for the immediate future. She indicated that in order to meet the 185-day state requirement, Weston would use three remaining snow days. She indicated that teachers would work on their planned professional development day on March 13 and again on Monday March 16 to further develop the online education platform, "Weston School from Home." She said that online learning would begin on Thursday, March 18, if schools remain closed. Dr. Connolly said the last day of school would be no later than June 26. She asked for patience, noting this is uncharted territory and indicated they would contact families to determine technology needs and how to assist and provide devices where necessary. Dr. Connolly said teachers would be working full days. She said the district was doing its best to be proactive in ways to stop the spread of Coronavirus and encouraged all to take care of ourselves, others, and the community. She stated that Weston as a district has made the right decision to keep children at home and keep gatherings to a minimum.

Dr. Carter described some aspects of the way online learning would work. He indicated that there is no replacement for face to face learning, noted there will be mistakes, and said some teachers are more comfortable with technology than others, but he expressed confidence in the online platform. Regarding a question about assessment and grades, Dr. Connolly indicated they would be flexible and fair, with the students' best interest in mind. She said they could probably not perform assessment of student work but would provide tools for student to have access to learning. She said there would be flexibility regarding end of quarter 3 at the high school too.

Mrs. Black and Mr. Cobb read several questions emailed from parents regarding Coronavirus testing and statistics, use of masks, and online learning. Ms. Diotalevi said the Board of Health is managing the statistics for the community, Ms. Melchionda for the schools. She noted there were some cases pending, some negative, some positive, who will remain in quarantine. She indicated there were nine people in

quarantine in Weston, all part of the Biogen community, six positive and one inconclusive. She noted a person must have two negative tests 24 hours apart after testing positive before quarantine is lifted. Mr. Cobb indicated his concern about data not being available and question about testing. Mrs. Stewart expressed concern and would like /Weston to be proactive with planning for the long term. She also said she would like all employees to be paid no matter what happens. Dr. Connolly indicated Ms. Matthews is working with legal counsel and the unions regarding this. There was discussion about risk to community, the need to rethink events planned, and keeping social distance.

The Committee planned a meeting to take place Tuesday, March 17, at 7:00PM, tentatively at Case House. Mrs. Black said they would discourage attendance at the meeting and hope to have livestream available. She said any questions could be directed to her. Mr. Cobb extended gratitude and appreciation to the school staff. Mrs. Black concurred, thanked everyone for their flexibility, and apologized that the anticipated livestream was not working.

#### Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:38 AM..

No Documents used by Committee: