

**COMMITTEE ON LIAISON
MARCH 11, 2019 at 6:08 p.m.
COMMITTEE ROOM
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Voting Members present: President Michael Anderson, Alderman Michael Concannon, Alderman Mark Gaffney, Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Alderman Lindsay Higgins, Alderman Joanne Campbell, Alderman Richard Gately, and Alderman Edward Tedesco. Absent: Alderman Robert Ferullo

Also present: School Committee Chairman Michael Mulrenan and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Matthew Crowley

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Order to meet with the School Committee: Chairman Mulrenan said Alderman Concannon is the council's liaison to the School Committee and his attendance at School Committee meetings has been great. Dr. Crowley distributed a document entitled "Woburn Public Schools – Blueprint for our Future" to the City Council. Motion made by Alderman Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Alderman Tedesco to accept the aforementioned document and place it on file; approved, 8-0. Dr. Crowley said there are links on the School Dept.'s website to all the objectives referenced on the front page of the handout. He said this is a blueprint for the next 3-5 years. He said the objectives represent the three core values – Equity for all students; Consistent & Rigorous Curriculum, and Professional Practice. He said he welcomes all members of the committee to take a peek at the links on-line. He referenced an acronym at the bottom of front page that reads WPS PRIDE – meaning Productive Respectful Involved Diverse Educated. He referenced enrollment data on page 2 of the document that indicates the student population continues to become more diverse. He said page 3 of the document indicates 38 percent of the student population is classified as high needs students. He said 22 percent are economically disadvantaged. He said 11 percent are English language learners and that ratio continued to climb. President Anderson asked how the 38 percent ratio of high needs students compares to other communities. Dr. Crowley said the figure is not as high in communities like Winchester and Lexington. President Anderson asked if the high needs classification includes economically-disadvantaged students. Dr. Crowley replied it does, and ELL and students with disabilities are also classified as high needs students. Dr. Crowley referenced the MCAS results on page 4 of the handout and said the district is pretty much in line with the state average. He said the high school is also performing at or near the state average in terms of MCAS scores, as referenced on page 5. He said he refers to this month as "March Madness" due to the preponderance of standardized tests. Dr. Crowley referred to page 6 of the handout and said that information was gleaned from principals and was recently presented to the School Committee. Chairman Mulrenan said the addition of adjustment counselors was approved through last year's budget and has been beneficial to the school system. Alderman Campbell asked how many adjustment counselors are in the system. Dr. Crowley replied there is an adjustment counselor in each elementary school, one at each middle school and three at the high school. He said WHS Principal Jessica Callanan is always asking him when she can get more help. Dr. Crowley referenced the "Bright" program which re-introduces students to the high school from hospitalization. He said the program

services dozens of students and is in its second year. Alderman Campbell asked for what reasons students are hospitalized. Chairman Mulrenan said there are a variety of reasons why students are hospitalized. Dr. Crowley said students can be hospitalized for anxiety among a range of issues including traumatic experiences. He said there are ambulance calls to all the schools, primarily the high school. He said students need to get help quickly. He said staff is expected to go beyond just education. Alderman Campbell said that information is eye-opening. Alderman Gately said education is going in a whole different direction these days. Dr. Crowley said one of the best additions to the school system was the human resources person. He said technology is ever-increasing, and the gap is teaching the teachers how to make technology relevant to the students. Chairman Mulrenan said the state is requiring the city to do certain things. Alderman Gately said the state is fond of unfunded mandates. Dr. Crowley said there are 147 students at the Shamrock pre-school, which he said is integrated. He said if you want to be amazed, take a trip to the Shamrock pre-school. He said there is also a pre-school at the Reeves, but it is not integrated and there are only 35 students. He said he would like to establish a parent information center. He cited an example of a family that moved to the city with four students who attend four different schools and that needs to be streamlined. Chairman Mulrenan said the district is trying to implement central registration. Dr. Crowley said he thinks of that aspect as enhancing customer service. President Anderson said most people would flip out if they had to register four students at four different schools. Dr. Crowley said he would like to enhance services for ELL students. He said the addition of a part-time paraprofessional who speaks Portuguese has been helpful. He said the status of the turf field at the high school is up for review. President Anderson asked if there are any other capital projects looming. Dr. Crowley said the field is the priority. He said both the stadium field and the practice field need to be addressed. Chairman Mulrenan said the fields are used almost around the clock. Dr. Crowley said the stadium also includes a track and there is a desire to do the project the right way. He said the priority would be to finish the stadium field first and then address the practice. Field. He said there is a fund with rental income but it will not cover the entire cost of replacing the field. President Anderson said there is a tendency in education to pay attention to the Advanced Placement students and Special Education students and the students in the middle slip through the cracks, but he hasn't heard of this happening recently. Chairman Mulrenan attributed the equality in education at the high school to Principal Callanan. Dr. Crowley said he is glad to hear President Anderson's comments. Chairman Mulrenan said it took a lot of people a lot of time to come up with this vision. Dr. Crowley said a Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS) program has been implemented with a grant obtained by Dr. Michael Baldassarre, Asst. Supt. for Student Services. He said training started at the Goodyear School, then the high school and then the White School. He said the goal is to provide staff with a common language when they are dealing with crises. He said the next school is the Kennedy, and in time all the staff will be trained in TCIS. He said the program is in partnership with the Woburn Boys & Girls Club and the YMCA. Dr. Crowley referenced the Modular Approach to Therapy for Anxiety, Depression, Trauma and Conduct. (Match-Adtc) program in collaboration with a Harvard Medical School professor who provides staff with 40 hours of training to deal with the students who need help the most. Dr. Crowley said the FY '20 school budget will be presented to the School Committee tomorrow night. He said the budget was compiled with the same approach the administration used last year. He said Mayor Galvin has indicated a 3.5 percent target increase. He said out-of-district special education costs are really high. He said the costs for out-of-district special education are unpredictable. He said a student moved to Woburn from another state and is costing the district

\$266,000 in special education funding. Chairman Mulrenan said the district cannot control tuition. Alderman Concannon said the district is offering more services so there are not as many out-of-district placements. Chairman Mulrenan said the goal is to keep Woburn students in Woburn. Dr. Crowley said there will be a Stem Scopes symposium on March 27 at the Boys & Girls Club and an Open House on April 1 at the Woburn Public Library. The open house will focus on learning together “The Tanner Way,” and is open to the public, with a raffle for Red Sox tickets. President Anderson asked how much of the 3.5 percent increase in the budget will be consumed by salary. Dr. Crowley replied most of it. Alderman Gately said he does not like it when money for materials is cut from the school budget. He said he would like to see money for supplies put back into the budget. Alderman Tedesco said the budget reflected 3-year trends and was adjusted accordingly. Dr. Crowley said the school department never wants to shortchange students. Alderman Concannon said the blueprint is very helpful. He said it is a reality-based road map. He said he feels like the City Council and the School Dept. are on the same page and headed in the right direction. He said last year’s budget was the most realistic he’s ever seen. He said a good chunk of the proposed 3.5 percent increase will go toward fixed costs and salaries. He said hopefully there is a little bit of wiggle room in the budget. Chairman Mulrenan said the budget is vetted carefully. He said if there is a request for three of something, the School Committee asks if they can get by with two. Alderman Mercer-Bruen asked if there has been any feedback from parents. Dr. Crowley responded most of the feedback has been positive and he hopes there is constructive commentary at the forum in April 1. He said the forum is an opportunity for the community to be further engaged in the process. Chairman Mulrenan said the council can go deeper into the blueprint on-line. President Anderson said it is helpful to meet with the top school officials at least once a year. Alderman Concannon said he is looking forward to reviewing an innovative and creative budget.

Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to adjourn; approved, 8-0. President Anderson adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Attest: _____
Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees