



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes Tuesday, January 14, 2020 Westport Town Hall, Room 309, Westport, CT

Attendees: Harold Bailey (Presiding), Bernicestine McLeod, Zoe Tarrant, Maggie Mudd, Dolores Paoli, Judy Hamer, Catherine Lewis, Althea Seaborn, and Ramin Ganeshram

Guests: Jacob Santos (Westport Playhouse), Ted Gilman, Josiah Tarrant, Brett Aronow, Lauren Francese (Westport Schools), Rebecca Marsick (Staples High School), Jennifer Keller (Westport Library), Pippa Bell Ader (Sustainable Westport), and Danielle Teplica

The meeting was called to order at 8:05AM.

Welcome: Happy New Year! Our Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration is this weekend. We do have a snow date if the weather is bad.

Approval of Minutes: Judy moved that the minutes of our December 12, 2019, meeting be accepted with an amendment. Dolores seconded the motion. The motion carried. The minutes will be posted.

Schools/Strategic Planning/Staples/Board of Ed:

- Harold, Zoe, Catherine, Lauren, and Bernicestine met last Thursday with Joe Erardi who is the consultant working with the Board of Education (BOE) on the search for our new school superintendent. Presented to him were:
 - a statement on the school environment as developed last year;
 - a list of microaggressions compiled from input by students, teachers, administrators, parents;
 - a list of recommendations developed by TEAM Westport re: diversity equity and inclusion for the Westport Schools District
 - Foremost is the need for someone who will lead the team focused on diversity for the entire district.
 - Currently each school building individually has responsibility.
- Zoe's video. [If you would like to see the video, we can arrange a special meeting.]
- We have the commitment to provide two questions to be asked of candidates for superintendent. We also want to talk to the Board and try to have more input.
- Lauren presents to the BOE's Teaching and Learning committee on Thursday at 1pm. The topic is the Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native American studies one-credit elective course that has been state mandated (as is Holocaust education) to be taught in each school district (pilot year 2021-22). The curriculum will be provided by the State Education Resource Center (SERC). The goal is to encourage students to take it. With fewer than 15 students, you can't conduct a course. Technically courses exist now at Staples, but we need to think about a multi-year phase-in for this course and how it might/or might not tie in with graduation requirements. There are still lots of questions since the course is not developed yet.

Across the state, Professional Development training is most definitely needed. Materials, too, must be available through the libraries. Westport is trying to be flexible and to give students choices. Thus far this year, our district has made available books for teachers on equity and access and is working on how we are teaching these topics. We have never had a course that was written somewhere else, so input is needed. Lauren is a co-Chair of the Fairfield County Regional Social Studies Council.

PTA Micro-Aggressions/PTA Parent Updates/TW Book Club

- TEAM Staples is meeting every week. Students will be participating at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration on Sunday. They are also actively working to hold a February program at Staples.
- We are working on establishing TEAM Westport PTA representatives.
- We are hoping to continue our TEAM Westport parent meetings on a monthly basis. If we have problems scheduling monthly meetings at the Library, Ramin committed that can use space at the Westport Museum.
- We are working on incorporating the TEAM Westport Book Club with the other book clubs run by the Library. There was a suggestion that we look at creating a virtual book group, so that more can participate. We'll investigate further.
- We have some shelves in the Library that have been set aside for TEAM Westport reading selections.
- We are also working with the Library on an Equity Lab concept. More to come.



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- We are working with the local association of PreK schools in Westport, Weston, and Fairfield (with Eileen Ward of CCDC here in Westport) to look at training in diversity, equity and inclusion. There are more diverse kids coming through at an earlier age and parents are more conscious.

Westport Museum: The next exhibit opening on Monday, January 20, 2020, is entitled Dragon Lady: The Life of Sigrid Schultz, female World War II correspondent for the Chicago Tribune and served as a spy against Nazi Germany. She later resided in Westport until her death.

MLK/Clergy:

- At this coming Sunday's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration we need volunteers from this group to hold buckets to collect donations. An appeal will be made to support the Anti-racism training work by TEAM Westport in Town. Maggie, Dolores, and Danielle volunteered. We are asking that all volunteers be there by 2PM. It should be a great session with Professor Carol Anderson keynoting.
- We are also working on hosting a trip in October to Montgomery, AL, to the Equal Justice Initiative and the Civil Rights memorials there and are now evaluating groups to conduct the tour. Anyone joining us would arrange their own travel to and from Alabama. We are targeting another site additionally (Selma and/or Birmingham). Stay tuned as we finalize the dates and itinerary.

Playhouse:

- We are all set to host this Sunday's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration.
- A re-imagined production of *Ain't Misbehavin'* will be presented later this summer. Mark Lamos has been able to recruit acclaimed black director, Camille A. Brown (Tony nominee for directing *Choir Boy*), as director of the redo.

Westport Library: Coming up:

- On February 4th, the documentary, *True Justice: Bryan Stevenson's Fight for Equality*, will be screened by Trey Ellis, its Executive Producer, at 7pm.
 - The Library will have a TEAM Westport display in the Library for February (books, videos).
 - On March 17th, TEAM Westport is co-sponsoring a conversation with author, Maisy Card, *These Ghosts are Family*.
- Affordable Housing:** Planning and Zoning Committee is proactively proposing an affordable housing development using state owned land in Westport. Town wants to be proactive. It is asking 4 acres in order to develop 36 units of housing with 90% affordable. Other areas currently include Sasco Creek and Hales Court. TEAM Westport is involved with the P&Z Sub-committee focused on Affordable Housing. We stated our support for the proposal at a recent meeting.

Essay Contest: The topic will be announced on January 24th with a Feb 28 submission deadline. Winners will be announced at the Library on April 3rd.

Announcements:

- Judy is speaking at the Women's Club on Monday, February 3, 2020, at 1pm about family values and will include a discussion about her family artifacts that now reside in the collection at the Smithsonian.
- Judy chose 4 films by black directors being shown in a film series during February at Meadow Ridge.

At 9:20 we entered Executive Session to discuss and fine-tune the wording for the Essay Contest.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05am. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 4, 2020, in Room 201 at Westport Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernicestine McLeod
Secretary