

**Westport School Committee
Regular Meeting
DATE: Thursday, February 17, 2022
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting**

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MINUTES

Members Present: Michelle Orlando, Melissa Pacheco (*arrived at 6:43 pm.*), Nancy Stanton Cross, Antonio Viveiros
Members Absent: Nancy Tavares

Also Present: Kevin Aguiar Assistant Principal Westport Middle School, Thomas Aubin Superintendent, Laura Charette Principal Westport Middle School, Jennifer Chaves Extended Day Director, Stacey Duquette PreK-Gr. 4 Principal, Darren Elwell Director of Curriculum, Michael Grandfield Assistant Principal Westport High School, John Jack Keane Student Representative, Kerri McKinnon Principal Westport High School, Lori Melo Administrative Assistant, Sean Persico Assistant Principal Westport Middle School, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Elaine Santos Special Education Director, Anthony Tomah Technology Director, 72 Community Participants

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance - Vice Chair Stanton Cross opened the Virtual School Committee Meeting at 6:31 pm. with a quorum of the members present, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Vice Chair Stanton Cross announced:

This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, Section 20 and on June 16, 2021 Governor Baker signed an Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency.

Comments and Statements from the Public - There were none.

III. Informational Agenda

A. Student Representative – John (Jack) Keane reported on high school athletics. Both basketball teams wrap up playing next week. Varsity girls' team are 11/7 with 2 games left to play. Varsity boys' team are 16/2 with 2 games left to play. Both teams qualify for the State Tournament. Senior night for boys is tomorrow versus Bishop Connolly at 6:30 pm. and for girls Wednesday February 23 at 6:30 versus NB Voke.

Environmental Club was created this week. They are volunteering to help the Audubon Society with a clean-up.

B. Superintendent Report - Mr. Aubin shared numbers for district wide attendance for the past week. Mr. Aubin gave a shout out to all involved with Matilda Junior. The Arts are back in Westport.

They are working with the architects and builders on acoustical issues.

Mr. Aguiar is staying on top of the punch list.

Mr. Aubin asked if there are any questions? There were none.

C. WCS Bill Warrant: 2-11-22 - Vice Chair Stanton Cross reported a Bill Warrant dated 2.11.22 in the amount of \$163,929.84 was emailed to school committee members for review.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any questions? There were none.

D. School Attending Children - Ms. Rapoza explained this report lists all school age children that live in Westport attending Westport schools or other schools. These out of district numbers are stabilizing and coming down with Westport enrollment going up slightly. This is reported to DESE.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross asked if the district keeps track of the number of 8th graders applying to other schools? Ms. Rapoza said yes and will get this list to the members. Starting in March Guidance gets requests for grades and recommendations along with applications to other schools. Can this information be available in Spring 2022 opposed to the Fall? Ms. Rapoza said she can make this information available.

Ms. Rapoza shared that home school is monitored by Westport with 57 students total.

(Ms. Pacheco arrived here at 6:42 pm.)

E. DESE Mask Mandate Update - Mr. Aubin mentioned the face covering policy from MASC was provided as part of the committee's package. Ms. Rapoza shared this policy on the screen dated Feb. 9, 2022 entitled Update on DESE Mask Requirement. Mr. Aubin reminded everyone if the mask mandate is lifted, children need to still wear masks if back from a 5-day quarantine, going to the nurse's office, or riding the bus.

Districts have been given local authority to vote up or down on mask wearing and the mandate can be lifted on February 28th. The School Committee will need to make a decision on mask wearing.

Ms. Santos added it is strongly recommended that anyone not vaccinated or boosted continue to wear a mask in the school community.

Discussion took place on the Mask Mandate. If the mandate is lifted, choice should still be optional. Committee will revisit this policy if any significant change occurs.

The Board of Health did not make a recommendation for schools and was encouraged by significant decrease in numbers. The Town dropped the mask mandate last week.

There will be a vaccination clinic at the JRSR HS according to Mr. Armendo from the BOH.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross requested the following item be moved from the Action Agenda.

VI. Action Agenda

B. Review and Act on WCS Policy EBCFA – Face Coverings & MASC Policy EBCFA – Face Coverings - *(taken out of order)* -

A motion was made to drop the requirement for masking as allowed by DESE and make it optional for those who want to utilize masks.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Orlando

4/0/0

It was noted removal of masks extends to extra-curricular activities and athletics. The mask mandate will be lifted after school vacation and starts on February 28, 2022.

F. WCS Special Education Determination of IDEA – Meets Requirements - Ms. Santos reported the district has received a Special Education determination for 2022 as "Meets Requirements". There are 4 rating categories based on needs substantial intervention, needs intervention, needs assistance, and meets requirements which Westport was awarded. The determination is also based on categories that include 5-year cohort graduation rate, dropout rate of students with disabilities, monitoring of compliance, performance against our special education plan and any findings of disproportionality.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any questions? There were none.

G. Discussion of Textbooks and E-Books – Vice Chair Stanton Cross reported that everyone should have received the information explanation and breakdowns from Mr. Elwell in their package.

Mr. Elwell began by explaining in December DESE in response to learning loss posted competitive grant opportunities. One of them was called *Accelerating Literacy through High Quality Instructional Materials Grant*. The Westport District put together a proposal. A total of 15-20 educators would be conducting the work. Mr. Elwell reported today Westport was awarded \$75,000 to purchase a new core reading program. This program will be for either K-4, K-5, or K-6. They will be doing reports and curating findings.

Mr. Elwell covered the following slides in a presentation entitled: Textbooks and core content subscriptions

Striking a balance between screen time vs. print

Elementary Program Access - (K-6, ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies/ online and hard copy texts. Benefit of the one to one access students can engage with content)

Middle/High School Subscriptions - (grades 6,7,8, no textbooks for Science, grade 8 Government and Civics/ Showed Grades/Texts/Annual Subscriptions/ Costs)

Textbook Review Cycle - (Math, Science, Social Studies, ELA, World Languages have a 5-year textbook review cycle for these subjects)

Current Examples for consideration - (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Ancient Civilizations (2019) / showed columns for - Hard Copies only, One-Year Digital Only, Three-Year Digital Only with prices)

Mr. Viveiros asked how long typical science books last? Mr. Elwell mentioned about 10 years but does not recommend this because of information changing. Most textbooks offer a 1, 3, and 5-year subscriptions.

Ms. Orlando asked what replacement plan is presently used? Mr. Elwell explained when the state updates standards there is a review for alignment purposes. Condition is also looked at.

Ms. Pacheco mentioned the fact that there are students who learn differently. Having a number of books in school would provide hardcopies for those that need them. Having a balance is good. If textbooks are getting older, rather use tape and use the funds to have great teachers.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross mentioned she advocated to have one on one with the future not being hard books but rather having access to digital content to reduce costs. Ms. Stanton Cross requested that Mr. Elwell report back on what teachers want depending on subject matter and get feedback from teachers on their preferences between hard texts and digital content.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any further comments? There were none.

H. **Discussion of the WES / MAC Reconfiguration** - This item has been subject to budgetary issues. Ms. Duquette looked into the possibility of district offices moving into the MAC or WES. This would impact students by increasing class sizes so this is no longer an option.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any questions? There were none.

I. **Request the Transferal of the Campground from the Town to the School District** - Mr. Viveiros reported being on the Campground Committee and there was discussion about the schools officially asking the BOS to make a transfer of the campground property to be under the school's control in order to make it more streamlined.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross on behalf of the School Committee directed Superintendent Aubin to request in writing to the Board of Selectmen a transfer of the campground from the Town to the School District and to request the Campground Committee report to the school district in the future.

J. **FY23 Budget Discussion** - Vice Chair Stanton Cross reported the FY23 budget remains apart by \$661,000. There is still a lot of work to do.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross asked if any members want to discuss the budget? There were no requests to do so at this time.

K. **Subcommittee Updates** - Mr. Viveiros reported meetings take place several times a week. The relay issue has been resolved and they are nailing down punch list items. Project is still under budget and they are making sure items ordered have been received and needs are met.

Mr. Aguiar gave a quick update on the punch list. Leadership is working collaboratively to get things moving forward. Work continues on inside and outside.

Ms. Pacheco reported the CIPC are making recommendations for capital improvements. All towns are identifying their needs to seek funds from the capital plan with projects now going to the Select Board. Projects for town reached a total of \$713,000. Fixing the parking lot at WES did not get approval.

Ms. Pacheco reported the Cable Committee is working towards a contract renewal for Cable.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross reported the BOS met Monday. CIPC money was part of the budget. Questions about using ARPA funds was discussed at the FinCom meeting.

VI. Action Agenda

A. Review and Act on Minutes of Tuesday, January 25, 2022 Budget Work Session and Thursday, February 3, 2022 -

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of Tuesday, January 25, 2022 Budget Work Session.
Motion by Orlando, seconded by Viveiros 4/0/0

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of Thursday, February 3, 2022.
Motion by Orlando, seconded by Stanton Cross 4/0/0

B. Review and Act on WCS Policy EBCFA – Face Coverings & MASC Policy EBCFA – Face Coverings - covered above

V. Routine Matters - Correspondence and Notices - There were none.

VI. Topics the Chair could not Reasonably Anticipate Forty-eight (48) Hours in Advance of the Meeting - There were none.

FOLLOW UP ITEMS

The committee requests:

- Ms. Rapoza will get a list of 8th graders applying to other schools to the members.
- Mr. Elwell will report back on teachers’ preferences between hard texts and digital content by subject matter.
- Superintendent Aubin will request in writing to the Board of Selectmen a transfer of the campground from the Town to the School District and request the Campground Committee report to the school district in the future.

VII. Adjourn - A motion was made to adjourn. With members being present and voting individually and unanimously, the motion passes.

Motion by Orlando, seconded by Viveiros 40/0

Roll call vote:

Orlando Yes Pacheco Yes Stanton Cross Yes Viveiros Yes

The Virtual School Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

MEETING DOCUMENTS

- School Attending Children
- DESE Mask Mandate Update
- WCS Special Education Determination of IDEA
- Discussion of Textbooks and E-Books
- WES / MAC Reconfiguration
- Request the Transferral of the Campground from the Town to the School District
- FY23 Budget Discussion
- WCS Policy EBCFA – Face Coverings & MASC Policy EBCFA – Face Coverings

Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary