

Westport School Committee
FY22 Budget Public Hearing / Regular Meeting
DATE: Thursday, March 25, 2021
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87212507421?pwd=NCtYQkQrMUVhdFhNc2pYZ3RoeTBGdz09>
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Webinar ID: 872 1250 7421
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MINUTES

Members Present: Melissa Pacheco, Nancy Stanton Cross, Nancy Tavares, Antonio Viveiros

Members Absent: Michelle Orlando

Also Present: Kevin Aguiar JRSRHS Assistant Principal, Thomas Aubin Interim Superintendent, Laura Charette JRSRHS Assistant Principal, Jennifer Chaves Extended Day Director, Leah Chesney WES Assistant Principal, Mike Duarte Facilities Management Director, Stacey Duquette WES Principal, Darren Elwell Director of Curriculum, Cheryl Greeson MAC Principal, Kristin Mc Daniel HR Coordinator, Kerri McKinnon Interim Assistant Superintendent / WJSHS Principal, Lori Melo Administrative Assistant, Kim Ouellette Custodial Department, Tracy Priestner FinCom, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Elaine Santos Special Education Director, Melissa Sousa Business Office, Anthony Tomah Director Technology, 34 Community Participants

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance - Chair Viveiros opened the Virtual School Committee at 6:32 pm., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Chair Viveiros 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

Comments and Statements from the Public - Norman Abrahamson President of the Westport Federation of Teachers mentioned the absence of an interview process. On February 16, he wrote a letter to school committee members asking that stakeholders have consideration in the process of a superintendent search. He mentioned that tonight's Action Agenda has an item dealing with the Superintendent's position on a permanent basis. Mr. Abrahamson asked the SC to follow the practice of doing a robust search by stakeholders in choosing the next Superintendent of Westport Community Schools.

III. Special Agenda – FY22 Education Budget Public Hearing -

A motion was made to open the Budget Public Hearing on the School Budget.

Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Tavares

4/0/0

The Budget Public Hearing opened at 6:36 pm.

Chair Viveiros asked if anyone would like to weigh in on the proposed school budget. There was no one at this time. The Budget Public Hearing will remain open to further give opportunity for public comment.

A. Proposed FY22 School Committee Education Budget (Separate Cover) - Mr. Aubin reported the FY22 school budget is a level service budget proposed at \$20,299,930 which reflects an increase of 2.09% over the Town proposed budget of \$19,495,683. Mr. Aubin mentioned with the opening of the new school there will be some new positions, for example a Principal for the Middle School. The district is under contract negotiations with the Westport Federation of Teachers and there has been increased costs associated with food, utilities and Grab & Go meals. Mr. Aubin added there has been a drop in enrollment by 34 students. There is discussion on the hold harmless law which could bring Westport back to the 2019 enrollment figures.

B. General Discussion of FY22 Proposed Budget - Ms. Rapoza shared her screen and did a presentation entitled **WCS Proposed FY22 Budget March 25, 2021** that covered the following items: District Goals, Student Accomplishments, Fiscal Year FY22 Assumptions, Transition Costs-Moving Schools, FY19 Per Pupil Expenditures,

FY22 Do we charge fees?, Fees Collected FY15-21, WCSFY22 Proposed Budget Summary and Additional Increase FY22, Staff Supports "Westport Has Heart", Special Education Enrollment FY14-FY21, Grants - Impact on the School Budget, Percentage of Free & Reduced Lunches to Total Enrollment, FY22 Percentage of Proposed Budget, FY22 Percentage of School Budget by Departments/Salaries vs. Expenses % FY22, Budget Comparison/School Enrollment SY2020-2021, Unfunded Mandates, School Year 2021-2022 New Middle High School.

Discussion was held on the determination of Title I funds. Mr. Elwell clarified that preliminary census data is tied in with the amount of Title I funds allotted to a district and not free and reduced lunch numbers.

Ms. Stanton Cross suggested to have ESSER II funds separated out since these are special funds and not a regularly yearly source of funds.

Ms. Priestner asked for clarification on the budget item FY21 Reinstatement Calendar adjustment - \$155,042. Ms. Rapoza explained a 2-day furlough for salary workers from both unions WFT and AFSCME was issued across the board. The budget was approved with a 2-day furlough that was not taken, therefore 2 days had to be added back in the budget for 2 days of salaries.

Ms. Priestner added that quantifying in terms of numbers, for example air purification systems and filters shows what is spent with tax dollars. People will be able to see how far those dollars do not go. There are lots of expenses on different items. Another suggestion was to include poverty percentages over the next 5 years into the budget slideshow.

Chair Viveiros asked if there were any questions or comments before closing the Budget Public Hearing?

Mr. Aubin added there was a comment from Ms. Maloney that she would like the process of a search committee be followed in the hiring of the Superintendent.

A motion was made to close the Budget Public Hearing on the School Budget.
Motion by Tavares, seconded by Pacheco

4/0/0

The Budget Public Hearing closed at 7:27 pm.

IV. Informational Agenda

A. Superintendent Report - Mr. Aubin thanked the BOH, Fire Dept. and WCS staff for arranging school to be a vaccination clinic where 60 vaccines were administered. This will be done again on Monday.

Ms. Greeson MAC Principal shared that they had a celebration of learning with their first official school assembly. They put together a year in review. Detective Rebello from the Westport Police Dept. used a drone and the at home learners were also invited. A program like this has not taken place in a long time. The "**Celebration of Learning at MAC 2020-2021**" video was presented to everyone to view. This video will also be placed on the Facebook page.

B. WCS Bill Warrant: 3-26-21 - Chair Viveiros acknowledged reviewing and signing the bill warrant dated 3-26-21 in the amount of \$320,028.15. The bill warrant was emailed to school committee members for review.

C. GO Guardian Discussion and Five Year Technology Plan – Mr. Tomah Director of Technology began by explaining 2 GO Guardian modules were purchased. **1. administration module** - Gives remote control classroom management. Views students screen and screen sharing. **2. teacher module** - Teacher can work with a student and have a one on one conversation, provides filtering and the ability to filter websites.

GO Guardian can only be used on student Chromebooks and it is an extension through Google. It does not apply to staff, home machines or devices not owned by Westport Community Schools. GO Guardian does not manage the camera and works when the student is logged under their account. Mr. Tomah added that GO Guardian has been around for a decade with over 10,000 schools using this worldwide. Parents can email the school principal or email Mr. Tomah with questions.

Five Year Technology Plan - Mr. Tomah put together a technology plan that encompasses 2024-2036. The district increased its technology footprint and went from having 700 machines to 2,600 machines. With the need to plan for the future, computer replacements are built into this plan for budget purposes. There is a 4-year replacement cycle for Chromebooks and laptops for staff. Labs and technological equipment as well as the lifespan of server and networking equipment is also under consideration.

Ms. Stanton Cross mentioned to consider a "*phased in approach*" by class and one with staff to spread out the costs over a designated period of time.

Ms. Greeson asked if new incoming K-students were considered for devices. Mr. Tomah mentioned they will have the devices from graduating seniors.

D. WCS Policies First Read:

The following policies are MASC recommendations to update and make changes to existing policies.

1. WCS Policy JFABE – Educational Opportunities for Military Children
2. WCS Policy JFABF – Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care
3. MASC Policy ACAB – Harassment
4. MASC Policy EBCFA – Face Coverings - Students in Grade 1 and below now need to wear masks and are not exempt.

E. Subcommittee Updates - Chair Viveiros reported the SBC met on March 17th. There was an approval of a change order concerning COVID mitigation and the use of the highest level of filters, and air purifiers with UV installed. These systems help against killing viruses using better filters and ultra violet emitters. It was noted these DO NOT emit ozones. Chair Viveiros reported on the budget figures. The project is on schedule.

Mr. Aubin reported public use of the tennis courts will not be until the new school is open in September 2021.

V. **Action Agenda**

A. Review and Act on Superintendent’s Contract and Addendum to Existing Contract - Chair Viveiros explained the SC met in Executive Session to discuss the process of a superintendent search. The following were some of the reasons why a search was not done. Searches are costly, with the last one totaling \$25,000, there is no guaranteed outcome, limited application pool from superintendent courtesy when a district wants to keep their in-house working candidate and finally a search was done 1 ½ years ago using public input. The SC felt comfortable with Mr. Aubin as the district’s leader. He has done a great job steering the ship in a good direction for the district.

Ms. Stanton Cross added she was part of the last superintendent search committee. Community input highlighted the following points; 1. They wanted stability in the district, not an open and swinging door. 2. Community presence that gets Westport’s balance. 3. Programming, grant writing and innovation. Ms. Stanton Cross mentioned many positives with Mr. Aubin including managing transition of new school, COVID response, facility management experience, senior graduation, summer programming and being a Westport taxpayer.

Ms. Tavares added that Mr. Aubin is exactly what the district needs and a good rapport has been established. He has secured grant programming, has a vision for the district, uses forward thinking and his work has spoken for itself.

Ms. Pacheco mentioned to have the community involved in a search when one was done just 1 ½ years ago would be disruptive.

Mr. Viveiros added having a brand new leader July 1 when a new school opens would not be helpful to the district.

A motion was made to authorize Chair Viveiros to give a 3-year Superintendent contract to Thomas Aubin.
Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Tavares 4/0/0

A motion was made to approve adding an addendum to the existing contract to remove the word “Interim” on June 30, 2021, the position title will now be Superintendent.
Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Tavares 4/0/0

B. Review and Act on DESE Guidelines for Full In-Person Learning - Ms. McKinnon Principal of JRSRHS reported that Ms. Charette and Mr. Aguiar are reaching out to 243 remote families receiving some responses and non-responses. Deadline is set for tomorrow to respond.

- Choices are:
1. Remain full remote
 2. Transition to full in person model

After responses are tallied, then the building will be prepared from the results of the data. The target date is April 12, 2021 which is the start of the new term. They are working hand in hand with the Board of Health.

Discussion took place on the changes in travel guidelines. Mr. Aubin reported there will be a meeting on March 29th about this topic.

A motion was made to approve April 12, 2021 to begin the full in-person model.
Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Tavares 4/0/0

C. Review and Act on Minutes of Thursday, March 11, 2021 -
A motion was made to approve the Minutes of Thursday, March 11, 2021.
Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Tavares 4/0/0

D. Review and Act on the WJRHS Field Trip – Gr. 8 – Dave and Busters, Providence, RI – June 14, 2021 -
A motion was made to approve the WJRHS Field Trip for Gr. 8 to Dave and Busters, Providence, RI on June 14, 2021.
Motion by Tavares, seconded by Stanton Cross 4/0/0

A. Review and Act on a Donation of a (used) Tumbleforms 2 Floor Sitter Valued at \$150 and a (used) Buffalo Board Stander Valued at \$350 by a Westport Parent - Ms. Santos explained the Buffalo Board Stander assists a student who is not mobile to strengthen their legs and the Tumbleforms 2 Floor Sitter helps a student to position themselves. The parent was thanked for their donations to the district.
Motion by Tavares, seconded by Stanton Cross 4/0/0

VI. **Routine Matters - Correspondence and Notices -** There were none.

VII. **Topics the Chair could not Reasonably Anticipate Forty-eight (48) Hours in Advance of the Meeting -** Chair Viveiros received an email concerning backed up traffic at WES and in front of the new school building. Mr. Aubin is in communication with the Police Department and low-cost solutions are being explored that will be shared soon.

VIII. **Adjourn -** A motion was made to adjourn. With members being present and voting individually and unanimously, the motion passes.
Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Tavares 4/0/0

Roll call vote: Pacheco Yes Stanton Cross Yes Tavares Yes Viveiros Yes

The Virtual School Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

MEETING DOCUMENTS

Proposed FY22 School Committee Education Budget

GO Guardian Discussion and Five Year Technology Plan

WCS Policies First Read:

1. WCS Policy JFABE – Educational Opportunities for Military Children
2. WCS Policy JFABF – Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care
3. MASC Policy ACAB – Harassment
4. MASC Policy EBCFA – Face Coverings

Superintendent’s Contract and Addendum to Existing Contract

DESE Guidelines for Full In-Person Learning

WJRHS Field Trip – Gr. 8 – Dave and Busters, Providence, RI – June 14, 2021

Review and Act on a Donation of a (used) Tumbleforms 2 Floor Sitter Valued at \$150 and a (used) Buffalo Board Stander Valued at \$350 by a Westport Parent

Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary