

**Westport School Committee**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**DATE: Thursday, December 17, 2020**  
**TIME: 6:30 p.m.**  
**PLACE: Virtual Meeting**

Please click the link below to join the webinar:  
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**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Michelle Orlando, Melissa Pacheco, Nancy Stanton Cross, Nancy Tavares

**Members Absent:** Antonio Viveiros

**Also Present:** Thomas Aubin Interim Superintendent, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Kerri McKinnon Interim Assistant Superintendent / WJSHS Principal, Laura Charette JRSRHS Assistant Principal, Anthony Tomah Director of Technology, 114 Community Participants

**I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** - Vice Chair Tavares opened the Virtual School Committee at 6:33 pm., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Chair Tavares 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 -**

**Ms. Adrienne Beauregard** would like the members to be cautious with a decision in having 100% remote for 2 weeks after the holiday break. She mentioned doing a 1 week only and go back January 11, 2021. Ms. Beauregard made a point about parents placing their children in child care centers for remote learning where there could possibly be a higher transmission rate. She is impressed with the staff at MAC.

**Mr. Pete DeFusco** gave his opinion regarding the proposed sign. He feels a sign is unnecessary and will detract from the beauty, it will be overkill and damage the aesthetics of the residential neighborhood. Keep signs in the business district. Vice Chair Tavares mentioned a sign is on the agenda for discussion.

**Nicole Potter** would like to have the members consider keeping students attending school in person. This is the best and safest place they can be, especially with mental health issues arising. Nothing compares with face to face connections. Ms. Potter said teachers are wonderful at MAC and have a great impact on students.

**Ms. Caitlin Cowell** mentioned it is hard to manage remote learning with her three children in K and grade 3. Online learning is very different. Staff is doing a fantastic job. Not seeing cases widespread in the community.

**Ginger Cameron** mentioned in the chat that lack of substitutes and staff is a concern.

### III. Informational Agenda

A. Superintendent Report - Mr. Aubin is working on an initiative to address the loss of student learning time and will present this at the next meeting. He thanked everyone in the Westport Community for the incredible job they have done.

Mr. Aubin announced good things are happening in the district. The EGaming Team competed today winning 3 games to 1 against Bishop Stang High School. College announcements will be coming up with a Brown University acceptance already made.

B. WCS Bill Warrant: 12-18-20 - Vice Chair Tavares reported that Chair Viveiros acknowledged reviewing and signing the bill warrant dated 12.18.20 in the amount of \$253,612.79. The bill warrant was emailed to school committee members for review.

C. FY22 Budget Discussion – Timeline Update - Mr. Aubin presented the FY22 Budget Development Timeline schedule. They are holding ongoing meetings. Mr. Aubin asked if there were any questions. There were none at this time.

D. Acknowledgement of Fall River Development Grant and Mr. Paul Joncas for \$25,000 for the Westport Community Schools - Mr. Aubin reported these funds were received from a grant to help support the Medical Club with augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and mixed reality.

E. Draft 2021-2022 School Year Calendar - Mr. Aubin explained they are considering Professional Development and Convocation earlier for staff just in case the new building needs more time.

A motion was made to approve the Westport Community Schools 2021-2022 School Year Calendar.

Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Orlando

4/0/0

F. Update of Fiber Purchase and Cost from COVID Funds - Mr. Tomah explained to the committee that by owning the fiber, savings will reach \$30,000 annually. This is a substantial savings compared to having a company own the fiber and having a lease agreement. Mr. Tomah is working with Charter and a company. There will be 3 months of labor and preparation from March - May. Mr. Tomah explained there is no manpower needed to sustain this. Fiber loop data travels in a circle and has leeway. The only expense would be to hire someone to fix the fiber if the pole splits and the fiber needs to be re-spliced at a cost of \$2,000-\$5,000. It is recommended to have a contract with a company for an hourly dollar amount if repairs were needed in the future.

G. Subcommittee Updates - Vice Chair Tavares reported the Policy Subcommittee has not met. Mr. Aubin reported the SBC met on December 16. They are moving forward, furniture decisions and key processing are complete, naming of rooms took place, and they are currently looking at larger rooms. Mr. Tomah reported they are looking at items such as Sphero, classroom kits, 2D systems, and Zspace. Beta testing will be a huge bonus for the district to be trailblazers.

Ms. Orlando reported the CIPC meeting will be held next week and the Audit Committee has not held a meeting recently.

Ms. Stanton Cross mentioned the Campground Committee will be discussed later on the agenda.

### IV. Action Agenda

A. Review and Act on Minutes of Thursday, December 3, 2020 and Tuesday, December 8, 2020 Work Session -

A motion was made to accept the Minutes of Thursday, December 3, 2020 and Tuesday, December 8, 2020 Work Session.

Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Pacheco

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B. Review and Act on a Digital Sign for the New Westport Middle High School - Vice Char Tavares explained today's vote is just to approve or not approve a sign for the new school. It was noted that community members shared in the chat they would like to know what the sign would look like and

appreciate sharing the design. Vice Chair Tavares mentioned there will be sign samples and community input will be received.

A motion was made to approve a sign at the new school.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Stanton Cross

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C. Review and Act on a Formation of a Campground Subcommittee - Mr. Jeff Wade from the former Campground Subcommittee gave an update via the phone. This committee gave recommendations to the BOS on what to do with the campground site that includes playfields, playing courts, bocce, shuffleboard, playground, picnic area, and trails around the wetlands with a main focus on playfields.

The SBC was asked if they could fund a design layout to see what could be done with the fields. For the fields on the school property, a grading design was not allowed by the DEP. This led to further investigation of the campground site for a well location in addition to more fields. There is 30 acres with half of this usable land located on the campground site. Funding through the CPC was looked into to build the fields. If funds are short, possible phasing to build one field at a time may be done. There is \$726,000 from contingency funds.

There would be 2 phases -

1. Design documentation, and permitting - \$282,000
2. Construction phase - \$3.75 - \$4.75 million.

Mr. Wade reported the Campground Committee completed their original task and is no longer together. It has been recommended that the BOS create a new committee and have 2 school committee members on it (Mr. Viveiros and Ms. Stanton Cross). The future of the fields should be supported by the school and the Town. The fields are for the school, maintained by the school, but will be open to the public.

A motion was made to support utilizing the campground site as playing fields in addition to the fields located at the new school building project site.

Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Orlando

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D. Review and Act on Modularity at the MAC – Purchase, Return or Lease - Ms. Rapoza shared her research on the modular units.

\$325,000 - buyout modular units - CIPC funds could be used  
\$190,000 - remove modular units - CIPC funds cannot be used  
\$ 77,991 - roll over lease of modular units for 1 year

Discussion was held on whether the old high school will be used by the school. Associated costs for utilities, heating, electricity, phones, computers, custodians, upkeep of fields, and maintenance of building was estimated and calculated at 3% versus the Town's estimate of 25% of the 155 sq. ft. building. It was noted the school district would need to pay 100% of custodial and maintenance of fields and only 3% of the other costs listed.

Ms. Rapoza mentioned based on modular lease, the \$77,991 is in the FY22 budget. A date for roll over has not been determined.

Discussion was held on requesting \$325,000 from CIPC funds as a first step.

Ms. Stanton Cross requested this item be tabled until a determination is made.

E. Review and Act on FY22 Jr./Sr. High School Schedule - Mr. Aubin requested to table this item.

F. Review and Act on Moving from In-Person to Full Remote for All Grades from January 4, 2021 and Return to In-Person on January 19, 2021 -

Mr. Aubin has received a lot of feedback and concerns over going 100% remote with a spike in the community. A letter from the school district nurses requesting to have a 2-week pause was also received.

In addition, they looked at data points and surveyed area districts. Mr. Aubin reported issues with staffing and substitutes which is also a statewide problem.

Cheryl Greeson MAC Principal gave an update to the members concerning the numbers of students and staff that have been quarantined. She requested to have a 2 week pause and this could alleviate a lot of stress.

Ms. Pacheco asked Mr. Aubin to give a recommendation for moving forward. Mr. Aubin suggested to go 100% remote for at least 1 week.

A motion was made to go to 100% remote learning 1 week after winter break with a return to school face to face on January 11, 2021.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Tavares for discussion

Discussion was held about the pros and cons of taking a pause and going 100% remote. Majority of the members feel a pause is not going to work and going fully remote would be more stressful for the lower grades. The motion was not voted on since the schedule will remain the same.

Ms. Pacheco asked what options are available for parents that want to keep their children home remote? Mr. Aubin mentioned he will be meeting with the Leadership Team and will get options out to the school community.

**V. Routine Matters - Correspondence and Notices** - Mr. Aubin acknowledged receipt of correspondence concerning the district plan after the holidays and about the remote snow day.

**VI. Topics the Chair could not Reasonably Anticipate Forty-eight (48) Hours in Advance of the Meeting -**

Ms. Stanton Cross mentioned she would like to have COVID funds cover a mental health professional specializing in the educational classroom experience to talk to staff for support and a connection.

Ms. Rapoza mentioned the Town has a free service for social emotional counseling.

**VII. 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 Pacheco

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Roll call vote:

Orlando Yes Pacheco Yes Stanton Cross Yes Tavares Yes

The Virtual School Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:51 pm.

**MEETING DOCUMENTS**

FY22 Budget Development Timeline

Acknowledgement of Fall River Development Grant and Mr. Paul Joncas for \$25,000 for the Westport Community Schools

2021-2022 School Year Calendar

SITEC Site Layout Plans

Proposed Westport Junior Senior High School SY21-22 Junior High Bell Schedule

Proposed Graduation Requirements

Westport Middle Senior High School Lunch Schedules

Letter from WCS Nurses concerning full remote for MAC and WES 2 weeks following winter break

