

**Westport School Committee
Work Session
DATE: Thursday, April 23, 2020
TIME: 5:00 p.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting**

Join video call – meet.google.com/nqm-ufkg-pja

Join by phone – +1 551-800-5455 PIN: 389 364 260#

MINUTES

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

Also Present: Dr. Gary Reese, Superintendent, Mitchell Aho WJSHS Principal, Karen Archambault Vice Principal WJSHS, Darren Elwell Director of Curriculum, Laura Honohan, Vice Principal WJSHS, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Melissa Sousa Business Office

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance - Chair Viveiros opened the Virtual School Committee Work Session at 5:02 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 - There were none.

III. Informational -

Budget -

Dr. Reese reported there was a meeting held with Shana Shufelt from the BOS and Mr. King Town Administrator on the school budget. Dr. Reese wanted clarification on supplies and needs for the schools. Remaining funds can be spent at the school's discretion to purchase items needed for the school. Unused funds at the end of the year cannot be used for the next year's school budget. Example of items for purchase could be Chromebooks, music department, athletics, gravel, dirt, uniforms, etc.

In prepaying collaboratives, the same procedure needs to be done next year.

Other items addressed at the meeting included:

A figure of \$345,000 will be cut from the budget and the Town informed that there will be an even more substantial reduction in funds. The Town also mentioned that Chapter 70 funds would be impacted, however this has not been confirmed. Dr. Reese will reach out to senator Rodrigues Chairman of the Ways and Means committee for clarification on Chapter 70 regulations.

Mr. King mentioned to approach the teacher's union to see if they will take less money in the contract so jobs could be saved.

With additional cuts the town/school percentage split may shift.

Furloughs were discussed and savings depends on the salary of individuals. A total of 25% of worker's salary will be the savings achieved from furloughs. With a furlough you have a return date. It was noted that for workers furloughed this year, the town will need to pay back funds in the next fiscal year. School budget will already be reduced, in addition you will have this expense in the next year.

It was recommended to make a list of just salaries with no names attached in order to calculate the savings from furloughs.

School year employees last day is June 30. There was a question on whether they get unemployment for July and August, Kristin will look into this.

Offer early retirement incentive as a possibility.

Dr. Reese asked the members to identify a target number. He can create a 3-tiered plan that will give various opportunities to consider when trimming the budget. After members were polled by the Chair, the range of figures went from \$840,000 to \$650,000. This is very difficult to predict due to the estimates of revenue loss being pre-mature. The school budget is about 84% people and salaries. Town's budget is retirements, pensions, health insurance, and only about 20% employees. Cuts to the school mean cuts to jobs. Mentioned was the fact of being transparent and knowing what exactly the Town will be reducing as well as explaining how reductions will affect the school operations.

Dr. Reese reported there is a meeting next week with FinCom and Mr. King.

There is a donation that was received of 30,000 to purchase Chromebooks. Richard Marks from the School Building Project provided information that the school can pre-purchase Chromebooks as part of the School Building Project for all grades 5-12, cost approximately \$150,000. Dr. Reese will get more information.

High School Handbook / Schedule

Discussion took place about not implementing the new 6 period schedule. Based on the meeting that took place with the Town there will be cuts and the cost to implement the new schedule is \$75,000 and there will be a change in administration.

Mr. Aho reported that Ms. Archambault and Ms. Honohan did all the schedule planning. The schedule structure is ready to be put in place the following year.

Ms. Honohan said staying with the existing schedule is actually an advantage for students to have extra time on learning. Block scheduling may be an advantage in getting kids back on track and assisting struggling students with remediation due to COVID-19.

Mr. Elwell explained that different schedule options had key objectives that were identified:

1. Afford students with blocks of time to have more classes.
2. Continuity in content areas.
3. Benefits of common planning time for teachers.

Mr. Elwell stated that the new schedule is not prudent at this time and is not the most responsible shift. There will be gaps in learning due to students not being in school and the existing schedule will work well with freshmen and sophomores.

Mr. Aho added that keeping the existing 4 x 4 schedule will help juniors and seniors fill their graduation requirements. If implementing the new schedule, teachers would need Professional Development time to write and develop curriculum for the new schedule.

Ms. Honohan mentioned other advantages of the existing schedule remaining in place is that government is built into the 8th grade curriculum, language will be 1 semester not 2, band will be 1 quarter and will free up some time.

It was decided to focus on the current schedule and possibly try to implement next year.

MOA-

Dr. Reese gave an update to the MOA. The only change to the MOA will be what information are the teachers presenting / what curriculum delivery looks like. The Commissioner wants to focus on identifying power standards essential to move students to the next grade level, what do students need to achieve this? The Commissioner will speak to Superintendents tomorrow on this.

Chair Viveiros asked about student engagement. Mr. Aho stated they have tried to make sure all students are engaging and they are working with students that are not. It appears the high school, using credit and no credit, has more student participation. There are about 65-70% in academics activities each week. They are looking at list of students not participating and speaking to parents to identify reasons why.

Discussion was held on retrieving student belongings. Each building is developing a plan to get materials to parents.

Next steps:

Create a list of salaries for furlough in order to figure a dollar value for savings.

Use \$650,000 as target number for the budget.

Implement no schedule change.

Important to set time for teachers to work on curriculum.

IV. Adjourn - A motion was made to adjourn the Work Session.

Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Pacheco

5/0/0

The School Committee Work Session ended at 6:10 pm.

