

**Westport School Committee
Budget Work Session
DATE: Monday, June 8, 2020
Time 6:00 p.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting**

Join video call - meet.google.com/nbk-defe-ocx

Join by phone +1 402-542-0276 (PIN: 909821231)

MINUTES

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

Also Present: Dr. Gary Reese, Superintendent, Thomas Aubin Assistant Superintendent, WJSHS Principal, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Melissa Sousa Business Office

I. Call to order - Vice Chair Tavares opened the Virtual School Committee Budget Work Session at 6:10 pm.

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

II. FY21 Budget Discussion -

Dr. Reese mentioned at the budget meeting with the Town, they requested to reduce the school budget by \$330,000, bringing the figure to \$18,441,131.

Discussion was held on whether a 2-week furlough in July would make financial sense. The \$600 per week additional funds would still be available and there is only a 3 week pay period in July with a week of no insurance payments. A cost savings of \$77,000 would be seen. Other budget reducing items include reducing the percentage increase for next year, reduction in staff, and retirement incentives. After reductions the budget is still off by \$216,000.

The auditor confirmed prepaying Special Education transportation of \$100,000 cannot be done.

Dr. Reese mentioned the negotiated increase, not including the 1% they were going to receive is 3% for WFT, 2% for AFSMCE, 1% for non-union and also based on merit capped at 1%.

It was noted that one of the Town's unions just gave employees a 2% FY21 increase.

Discussion on percentage increases/decreases was held with various options.

Ms. Pacheco asked if potential costs to make the district safe are included in the budget. Dr. Reese stated CARES Act funds totaling \$180,000 for COVID19 expenses will be received with money coming directly to the school. The town will have \$900,000 of anticipated expenses submitted through the CARES Act.

The district has a total of 10 out of district placements. Ms. Rapoza mentioned that prepay can be done for some of this.

Discussion was held on possible scenarios for what school will look like in the fall. Guidelines may say smaller class size, have a week in school then a week remote so all classes are not in at one time, 6 feet spacing, smaller isolated groups assigned to one teacher, reduce staff to student ratio, no mixing, and 12 people in each room.

The use and importance of having specialists was discussed.

Dr. Reese mentioned needing a plan for families and students that do not want to come back into school and will need 100% remote learning.

Ms. Stanton Cross recommended to form a committee with a working parent and a non-working parent from each school and include student voice. Dr. Reese will be sending out something on this soon.

Dr. Reese presented information on retirement incentives to the members. Based on teachers with 20 plus years of service a range of \$7,000 - \$10,000 could be offered as an early exit incentive. Right now, they get \$7,000 if announced ahead of time. In addition, payment for sick bank days up to \$5,000. Savings could reach \$17,000 - \$19,000 for each person. If everyone (20 total) took this incentive, a cost savings of \$200,000 could be seen. Based on supply and demand teachers' subject matter could affect the costs.

AFSCME - \$3,500 incentive, reflects 10% of salary, Step 1 is \$27,000. Cost savings of \$5,000 - \$6,000 per person could be seen, not as much as teacher's savings.

Discussion was held on potential layoffs. There is a state regulated date of June 15 for notification.

At tomorrow's Town budget meeting, Dr. Reese will provide potential savings with contract percentages and furlough savings.

Extended Day Request -

Dr. Reese requested direction from the committee on the following issue.

Jennifer Chaves requested to run the Extended Day Program this summer as mainly a daycare service and not a camp serving 40 students for parents that need child care service. A total of 17 children are on PACE vouchers.

Ms. Chaves wants to create a structure meeting all state guidelines and is working with the compliance person.

Each room would have no more than 6 students staying with the same staff member, no intermingling, and family members would be all together in one group.

The Board of Health needs to come in to check building, procedures, and play areas.

Discussion was held on the concerns of COVID19. It was suggested to have parents hold the district harmless for a COVID19 case by signing a liability waiver. This issue will be brought before legal counsel as well as the daycare EEC Regulations.

Dr. Reese will set up a Work Session on Thursday, by then the Board of Health will have come and Ms. Chaves can be present to explain her plan.

III. Adjourn - A motion was made to adjourn the Virtual School Committee Budget Work Session.

Motion by Tavares, seconded by Pacheco.

5/0/0

The Virtual School Committee Budget Work Session ended at 7:23 pm.