

**Westport School Committee**  
**Budget Hearing / Regular Meeting**  
**DATE: Thursday, March 31, 2022**  
**TIME: 6:30 p.m.**  
**PLACE: Westport Middle-High School Auditorium**

**MINUTES**

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

**Members Absent:** Nancy Tavares

**Also Present:** Thomas Aubin Superintendent, Lori Melo Administrative Assistant, Tracy Priestner, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Melissa Sousa Executive Assistant for Business Services

**I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** - Vice Chair Nancy Stanton Cross opened the In-Person / Hybrid School Committee Regular Meeting and Budget Hearing at 6:38 pm. with a quorum of the members present, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross announced the meeting would be running as a hybrid/in person meeting with 2 members joining remotely having full participation and voting rights. Remote members were Michelle Orlando and Melissa Pacheco.

**II. Comments and Statements from the Public** - There were none.

**III. Special Agenda – FY23 Education Budget Public Hearing -**

A. Proposed FY23 School Committee Education Budget (Separate Cover) - Vice Chair Stanton Cross reported there was a change in the proposed budget number with a vote to take place tonight. All members have reviewed the number. At the beginning of the budget process a total of \$663,000 was the budget deficit. Town agreed to provide \$300,000 of free cash. Vice Chair Stanton Cross explained in FY24 a structural budget deficit will continue with \$663,000.

Mr. Aubin shared the new budget number is \$20,335,369.

A motion was made to accept the FY23 Education Budget as stated by Mr. Aubin in the amount of \$20,335,369.

Motion by Orlando, seconded by Pacheco 4/0/0

Roll call vote:

Orlando	Yes	Pacheco	Yes	Stanton Cross	Yes	Viveiros	Yes
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**Budget Hearing Opened**

Vice Chair Stanton Cross made an announcement to officially open the Budget Hearing at 6:46 pm. The Budget Hearing will be kept open for any Public Comment and will remain open for at least thirty minutes.

B. General Discussion of FY23 Proposed Budget - Mr. Aubin thanked everyone for their involvement in the budget process including the SC members, Select Board, Finance Committee, Town Administrator, Ms. Rapoza and Ms. Sousa.

Ms. Rapoza asked if there were any questions? There were none.

Ms. Rapoza explained there will be a vote later in the meeting that will exclude a budget line item. The vote will take place after the Budget Hearing is over.

**IV. Informational Agenda**

A. Student Representative – John (Jack) Keane - Mr. Keane was not in attendance.

B. Superintendent Report – Mr. Aubin reported this week administration participated in an equity walk at all of the schools to observe teacher engagement with students, results will be sent to DESE.

There was a meeting with a company called zSpace to find a way to provide technical training for students without a need for space using 25 high powered laptops. Quote received for this program was \$186,000. They are looking for alternative funding to support this programming.

Mr. Tomah informed the committee there are 2 of these cutting-edge computers in the district now. They are equipped with a pen, glasses and can use CAD and CAM software as well as 3D- dissection. These devices provide a robust system and can be used in the areas of plumbing, healthcare, and HVAC. A demonstration will be provided.

Mr. Aubin reported the first lecture on Cyber Security took place and went well. They are getting ready for the next discussion for students and the community called "*You've Just Got Into a Car Accident Now What?*"

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

C. WCS Bill Warrant: 3-25-22 - Vice Chair Stanton Cross reported a Bill Warrant dated 3.25.22 in the amount of \$256,282.59 was emailed to school committee members for review.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any questions regarding the bill warrant? There were none.

D. Subcommittee Updates - Mr. Viveiros and Mr. Aubin attended a BOS meeting on Monday where the campground property was officially transferred to the school.

Mr. Aubin met with the Athletic Director Mr. Pacheco concerning the FY23 sports year and planning out fields needed for middle and high school sports. A preliminary plan will be presented to the committee. The committee will need to vote for a full middle school program or an intramural program. Differences between the two will be presented for the committee to decide.

Discussion took place on co-op sports and transporting students in the middle of the day to games. Ms. Rapoza mentioned purchasing vans with ESSER funds for student transportation and providing out of district services.

Vice Chair Stanton Cross requested for this item to go before the ARPA committee so ARPA funds can be used for the vans instead of ESSER funds.

Ms. Pacheco requested to conduct a sports survey of interests for middle and high school students. Ms. Pacheco mentioned vans could be used for transportation to games and dual enrollment for students needing to get to UMASS. These vans could serve as multiuse vans at different times of the day.

Ms. Priestner agreed the vans should serve as multiuse vehicles and be used for dual enrollment.

Ms. Pacheco reported the Westport Cable Committee is getting ready for contract negotiations. Mr. John Rezendes is providing students with filming opportunities. More information will be shared at next meeting.

Ms. Stanton Cross has been working with the Budget Committee and with the Town on use of former high school. School administration will stay in the building for a year and the community will be engaged to house other programming for example adult education, Town Recreational Department, Council on Aging for their day programming and lunch program, community partnerships using the auditorium, recreational basketball and expanding the Extended Day Program.

Anyone having any ideas or interests with programming for the old high school building can email Ms. Rapoza at [mrapoza@westportschools.org](mailto:mrapoza@westportschools.org).

Vice Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any questions?

Ms. Priestner asked if the school committee has been able to come to a written agreement with the BOS for the use of the old high school building? Vice Chair Stanton Cross mentioned there has been a

meeting of the minds with monetary contribution from the school being capped and responsibilities on paying with some legalese left in the agreement. Ms. Priestner asked with this MOU in the works does the committee feel comfortable voting on the budget number tonight? Vice Chair Stanton Cross mentioned there is a good faith understanding and trust between the parties, so moving forward with approving the budget number will be ok.

Ms. Pacheco clarified that the high school building has been transferred to the town. Town owns the building the school will occupy it and has the right to place programming as stated in the MOU.

Mr. Viveiros had a question on the current high fuel prices and the bus contract. Ms. Rapoza clarified the fuel costs for this year have been capped. Ms. Rapoza would like to hold a Budget Work Session concerning the future bus contract.

**Budget Hearing Closed**

Vice Chair Stanton Cross made an announcement to officially close the Budget Hearing at 7:24 pm.

**V. Action Agenda**

**A. Review and Act on Minutes of Thursday, March 17, 2022 and Tuesday, March 22, 2022 Budget Work Session -**

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of Thursday, March 17, 2022 and Tuesday, March 22, 2022 Budget Work Session.

Motion by Orlando, seconded by Viveiros 4/0/0

Roll call vote:

Orlando Yes Pacheco Yes Stanton Cross Yes Viveiros Yes

**B. Review and Act on FY23 Proposed Education Budget - Vice Chair Stanton Cross announced the budget number to submit on the town warrant is \$20,335,369. This number still leaves a monetary shortfall of \$363,000 with \$300,000 coming from free cash to lessen the effect. Next year the budget will begin by having a deficit of \$636,000.**

A motion was made to accept the budget number excluding line item 19 for the WES Media Center.

Motion by Orlando, seconded by Pacheco 4/0/0

Roll call vote:

Orlando Yes Pacheco Yes Stanton Cross Yes Viveiros Yes

A motion was made to accept the budget number including line item 19 for the WES Media Center.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Orlando 3/0/1

Roll call vote:

Orlando Yes Pacheco Yes Stanton Cross Yes Viveiros Abstained

Superintendent Aubin mentioned the district is clearly not satisfied with the budget number.

**VI. Routine Matters - Correspondence and Notices - Vice Chair Stanton Cross reported none.**

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

Ms. Rapoza shared they had a cafeteria audit and will give more information at the next meeting.

**FOLLOW UP ITEMS**

The committee requests:

- Vice Chair Stanton Cross requested van purchases go before the ARPA committee so ARPA funds can be used instead of ESSER funds.
- Ms. Pacheco requested to conduct a sports survey of interests for middle and high school students.

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

Motion by Viveiros, seconded by Pacheco 4/0/0

Roll call vote:

Orlando	Yes	Pacheco	Yes	Stanton Cross	Yes	Viveiros	Yes
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The In-Person / Hybrid School Committee Meeting and Budget Hearing adjourned at 7:37 pm.

**MEETING DOCUMENTS**

WCS Bill Warrant: 3-25-22  
FY23 School Proposed Budget

*Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary*