

**Westport School Committee
Regular Meeting
DATE: Thursday, January 5, 2023
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: Gloria Cabral

Also Present: Thomas Aubin Superintendent, Laura Charette Westport Middle High School Principal, Mike Duarte Director of Maintenance, John Jack Keane Student Representative, Ryan Keane Student Representative, Lori Melo Administrative Assistant, Kim Ouellette Supervisor of Custodians, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Antony Tomah Technology Director, 0 Community Participants

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance - Chair Stanton Cross opened the Regular School Committee Meeting at 6:30 pm. with a quorum of the members present, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

III. Informational Agenda

A. Superintendent Report – Superintendent Aubin proudly announced to the community that Laura Charette will be the new principal of the new middle school and high school. Everyone congratulated Ms. Charette.

The floors are tiled and buffed in the new school. Mr. Aubin thanked maintenance and custodial staff. Thanks also goes out to Mr. Duarte for watching the septic tank at WES. By next week the problem should be resolved.

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

B. Student Representatives: John (Jack) Keane & Ryan Keane -

Ryan Keane reported the first semester and term 2 will end Monday January 23, new schedule for exploratory classes will begin January 24, Parent Teacher Conferences will be January 25 from 6-8 pm., term 2 report cards will be on the Community Portal by Friday January 27, grade 7 and 8 will have a dance Friday January 13 from 6-8 pm., grade 4 will learn more about music at the Informational Music Night on Wednesday January 18 from 6:30 - 7:30, community walkthrough tours of the new school will take place Saturday January 21 from 8:30 am. -11:30 am.

John (Jack) Keane began by congratulating Lily MacDonald for receiving the Gallishaw award for Academic Excellence, there will be no school January 16 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, semester 1 is winding down and final exams will take place January 20 and 23, end of semester is January 23, semester 2 quarter 3 begins January 24, semester 2 Open House will be January 26 from 6-8 pm. , senior project presentations will be in the auditorium January 12 and 13. Winter sports is in full swing and all the sports teams present game status was announced. Girls varsity soccer team was awarded the Platinum Award for 2022 for receiving 0 yellow or red cards during the season.

C. WCS Bill Warrant: 12.30.22 and 1-13-23 - Chair Stanton Cross reported bill warrant dated 12.30.22 in the amount of \$232,080.59 and bill warrant dated 1-13-23 in the amount of \$248,896.74 were emailed to school committee members for review. Members also have a hardcopy of the bill warrants.

Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any questions regarding the bill warrants? There were no questions.

D. CIPC Update - Mr. Aubin met with Mr. Duarte and Ms. Ouellette to develop a 5-year capital plan.

Chair Stanton Cross mentioned the district is looking at consolidating the campus. Chair Stanton Cross asked about putting money into the MAC? Mr. Duarte responded that if we want to continue using the MAC the air conditioning needs more panels. The idea of possibly transferring the ac units over to WES was mentioned.

Chair Stanton Cross asked if there was anything critical that needs to be addressed at the MAC? Mr. Duarte responded that the building is in stable condition with a new roof, exterior doors, and windows. They could start addressing some of the tilework with an abatement job that could be done in sections or all at once. Mr. Duarte added the heating system is in good shape. Replacement of the water tank may be needed.

It was noted that the MAC is the oldest school building, built in 1956, with WES built in 1977. If the district consolidates, the building could be used by the town.

Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any questions? There was nothing further.

Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any questions on WES?

Mr. Viveiros shared that at the WES items that need to be addressed are the floors, ceiling, bathrooms need a facelift, and re-asphalt the parking lot.

Mr. Duarte agreed on these repairs, ranking them with parking lot first, floor tiles, then bathrooms. Mr. Duarte added that WES has a new roof and trees around the building have been removed.

Discussion was held on CIPC funds. Ms. Pacheco met with CIPC this week and shared it is helpful to have a list of needs, however the list should be more specific. A numbered list of priorities with quotes and explanation of urgency would be better to work with. For example, WES bathrooms function but need a facelift, WES heating system does not run digitally and it is hard to replace parts when things breakdown. Heating is crucial in the education of the students. They are working with a grant and may need matching funds for the heating system.

E. Dress Code / Uniforms Survey Discussion - Chair Stanton Cross mentioned a survey was distributed to parents on uniforms in the past. Members would like to redo this survey and requested to share it with the committee before distribution. This survey should be broken down by grade levels. It was noted there needs to be a plan and a process. Possibly start with younger grades then build up.

Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any comments?

Ms. Pacheco suggested as part of the survey to ask parents in what grade would they like to see uniforms introduced?

F. Strength & Conditioning Update - This item was passed on.

G. FY24 Budget Discussion -Discussion was held on the upcoming budget. There remains a monetary difference between what the school needs and what the Town will allot.

Chair Stanton Cross informed everyone that 85% of the school budget is personnel. Some teachers have Masters Degrees and the WFT contract increased by only 2%.

Approved budget - \$21,706,159
Town allotment - \$20,644,273 (increased by \$50,000)
There is a shortfall between the two figures.

Chair Stanton Cross raised a point of information on the percentage allotment to the schools from the Town. The school receives 54% of net new revenue only and not the amount of the Town's overall budget number.

Mr. Viveiros mentioned the committee is having Budget Workshops. If the same programs remain, advocating for the school budget must be done.

H. Hiring Freeze Discussion - Chair Stanton Cross placed this on the agenda to have an open conversation, with possibly better ideas on re-structuring. There is a need to be mindful about expenditures, be as fiscally prudent as we can, and think about the bigger picture.

There are positions to fill, however with the present state of the budget 5 months from now there may be cutbacks.

Some members do not want to see a hiring freeze and would like to leave hiring to the Superintendent as long as it stays within the budget parameters.

I. Acknowledgement of a \$1,000 Donation from BayCoast Bank for the WHS Senior Dinner Sponsorship - Chair Stanton Cross thanked BayCoast Bank for their generous donation to the district.

J. Acknowledgement of a \$5000 Grant from the Grimshaw-Gudewicz Charitable Foundation to be used for Scholarships for Westport High School Seniors - Chair Stanton Cross thanked Grimshaw-Gudewicz Charitable Foundation for their generous donation to the district. Scholarships are awarded to several students.

IV. Action Agenda

A. Review and Act on Minutes of Tuesday, December 6, 2022 Budget Work Session, Tuesday, December 13, 2022 Budget Work Session and Thursday, December 15, 2022 -

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of Tuesday, December 6, 2022 Budget Work Session, Tuesday, December 13, 2022 Budget Work Session and Thursday, December 15, 2022.

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

V. **Routine Matters - Correspondence and Notices** - Chair Stanton Cross reported there were none.

VI. **Topics the Chair could not Reasonably Anticipate Forty-eight (48) Hours in Advance of the Meeting** - Superintendent Aubin reported over the past week the district has received 3 grants totaling \$132,415. Ms. Kaminski wrote the grants and Ms. Charette announced they started planning. First, are funds for a Math Acceleration Academy totaling \$68,110. Ms. Charette explained they are gathering students that will be a good fit. Students that love math, need extra support, or need credit recovery for grades 9 and 10 will benefit from this program. Second, funds totaling \$43,235 was received for Hate Crime Prevention. Third, \$21,070 was received for a Genocide Education Grant to introduce genocide as part of the curriculum. Ms. Charette will meet with teachers to incorporate this in the classrooms and develop different ways to build this into the curriculum.

Mr. Aubin reported a plagiarism problem with AI Chat.

Mr. Aubin gave a shout out to Swansea's school Superintendent Robidoux for his handling of a recent ransomware attack on Swansea Public Schools' network. They had insurance on this.

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

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

Roll call vote:

Orlando Yes Pacheco Yes Stanton Cross Yes Viveiros Yes

The Regular School Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.

MEETING DOCUMENTS

WCS Bill Warrants: 12-30-22 & 1-13-23

CIPC Projects Memo dated October 27, 2022 from Mr. Duarte, Director of Maintenance

WCS Preliminary FY24 Budget Discussion 11.29.22 Budget A SC approved 12.13.22

\$1,000 Donation from BayCoast Bank for the WHS Senior Dinner Sponsorship

\$5000 Grant from the Grimshaw-Gudewicz Charitable Foundation to be used for Scholarships for Westport High School Seniors

Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary