

**Westport School Committee
Regular Meeting
DATE: Thursday, January 4, 2024
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: Westport Middle-High School Auditorium**

MINUTES

Members Present: Gloria Cabral, Evan Gendreau, Nancy Stanton Cross, Antonio Viveiros

Members Absent: Melissa Pacheco

Also Present: Kevin Aguiar Principal Westport Elementary School, Thomas Aubin Superintendent, Laura Charette Principal Westport Middle High School, Jennifer Chaves Out of School Time Director, Stacey Duquette Principal Macomber School, John (Jack) Keane, Student Representative, Ryan Keane Student Representative, Kristin McDaniel Human Resources Coordinator, Lori Melo Administrative Secretary, Wendy Miranda Special Education Coordinator, Alden Priestner Student Representative, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Nancy Tavares Special Education Coordinator, 2 Community Participants

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance - Chair Stanton Cross opened the Regular School Committee Meeting at 6:43 pm. with a quorum of the members present, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Comments and Statements from the Public -

Alisha Arruda parent shared that having extended care for Pre-K students is very important for her family. Ms. Gifford parent has the same situation with child care and finds having after school care very important.

III. Informational Agenda

A. Student Representatives:

Ryan Keane reported the 5th and 6th grade dance will be January 5 and the 7th and 8th grade dance will be January 19, January 9 a Career Fair will be held with over 40 businesses attending, no school on Monday January 15, middle school Open House takes place January 17, 2nd term ends January 22 with report cards on the community portal.

Alden Priestner reported seniors have begun receiving college responses and wish the best for those waiting, great time was had at the Talent Show winner was Lukewarm, congratulations to the senior class for winning the pep rally, International Exchange Club will be hosting students from Japan March 16-26, Winter Formal Dance will be March 22.

John Jack Keane reported Westport High School Informational Night will be January 17th for 7th and 8th graders, Thursday January 25 is an early release day, high school Drama Club thanks the Westport Education Foundation Endowment Fund of Southcoast Community Foundation for their generous grant to assist with the upcoming Sister Act performance, athletic statistics for boys' and girls' varsity basketball and boys' junior varsity basketball were reported, Co-op hockey is off to a good start, Westport Co-op Swim Team congratulates Finn Hall as team captain.

C. Staff and Student Attendance Reports - Chair Stanton Cross shared these reports have been received and reviewed by the committee.

Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any comments on the reports? There were none.

E. School Council Update - Chair Stanton Cross mentioned the reason why they are asking about each school's Student Councils is because parents have asked.

Ms. Duquette shared the Student Council at Macomber has had 3 meetings to date. They discuss different topics such as goals, how to make improvements, playground, safety drills, supports, grants, and town reports. Next topic will be pre-school. The next meeting is virtually on Thursday January 18. Meetings are once a month.

Chair Stanton Cross requested to send out a link to include the School Committee so someone can attend if possible.

Mr. Aguiar shared at Westport Elementary they have a 13-member School Council that took some time to advocate. There is a good mix of teachers, parents and community members. Their first meeting was November 28 and will be meeting next Tuesday January 9 at 5 pm. Topics for discussion include educational and district goals, identifying school needs, annual school budget and formulating School Improvement Plan. Next topic will be literacy. They meet every 2 months and will meet 3 more times this year. Meetings are hybrid with members attending in person or via a link. Mr. Gendreau will attend the next meeting.

Ms. Charette shared Westport Middle High School Student Council meets monthly every 4th Thursday and includes grades 5-12. Next meeting will be January 25 at 2:30 pm. Meetings are hybrid in person or via a link. They have been focusing on the NEASC process, finalizing reports, making suggestions and gathering evidence. With future meetings they will update the council on the plan for the NEASC visit, revision of student handbook and upcoming events. Ms. Charette would love to see more parents attend. Right now, there are 3 staff, 1 high school parent and 1 parent virtually.

Chair Stanton Cross would like to have the Student Council meetings for the middle and high schools separated in the future.

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

F. OST Expansion Presentation – Ms. Chaves explained the *Expansion Proposal: Early Childhood and Family Engagement* document presented to the school committee members. There was a survey sent to Preschool and Pre-K parents showing 76% were interested in afterschool care for a fee and 64% were interested in full-day childcare for 3 and 4 year old's for a fee.

Ms. Chaves went over the details for Cub Club at Macomber and Cub Club Early Learning Center both for Preschool and Pre-K. These programs would run with no additional staff.

Chair Stanton Cross asked how Special Education fits within these programs. Ms. Chaves explained that everyone has access. She asks for IEP's to maintain consistency and meets with parents to discuss individualized student needs. The program is optional and not mandated.

Mr. Viveiros asked how is this proposed program different? Ms. Chaves explained that students would stay at the Macomber School instead of being bussed to the former high school. This would allow Pre-school and Pre-K students better transition to stay at MAC and be part of the school.

Chair Stanton Cross suggested to be aware of significant cuts to the school budget with a \$2.1 million deficit. Due to the uncertainty of the budget for next year, it is suggested to run a "test pilot" program for this year.

Chair Stanton Cross asked Ms. Chaves what the timeframe would be to start the program? Ms. Chaves mentioned the licensing piece needs to be completed with sometime in February to get the program up and running.

Chair Stanton Cross requested to place this item on the Action Agenda for the next meeting. If there are any questions send them to Ms. Chaves. Superintendent Aubin will contact legal about licensing and obligations.

B. Superintendent Report - (taken out of order) Superintendent Aubin reported meeting about the possible storm coming up. There was a meeting to discuss the grant awarded for a virtual high dosage tutoring program. They experienced a great start to the school year. Mr. Aubin sent thanks and congratulations on the retirements of Chief Pelletier and Chief Legendre as well as thanks to Chief Dunn and Chief Baldwin. They all have been big supporters of the school district.

Westport soccer team will be honored at the State House on January 22. The bus leaves at 8 am. with event at 10 am. There will be lunch at the State House and a tour. Let Ms. Charette know if any School Committee members want to go.

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

D. Staff Absenteeism at MAC and WES - (taken out of order) Chair Stanton Cross asked Ms. Duquette how absenteeism is handled at Macomber School? Ms. Duquette mentioned that staff will shift around or Teaching Assistants cover and gets compensated to do this.

Mr. Aguiar was not present by the time this item was discussed to respond for Westport Elementary School.

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

G. WCS Bill Warrant: 12/29/2023 & 1/12/2024 - Chair Stanton Cross reported bill warrants dated 12/29/2023 in the amount of \$346,653.57 and 1/12/2024 in the amount of \$70,738.07 was 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 on the bill warrants? There were none.

H. Discussion of Relocation of District Administration Offices - Chair Stanton Cross explained that plans to move administration from the old high school was discussed in a Work Session. This plan would be separating administration across the school buildings. Plans to vacate the building was made when UMASS requested to use the building for a storage facility. Chair Stanton Cross reported receiving an email from Mr. Hartnett informing them UMASS is no longer interested in storage at the old high school. This item will be taken off the agenda.

I. FY25 School Budget Discussion -

A motion was made to table this item until the next School Committee Meeting.

Motion by Gendreau, seconded by Cabral 4/0/0

IV. Action Agenda

A. Review and Act on Minutes of the School Committee Meeting 12/14/2023 -

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of the School Committee Meeting 12/14/2023.

Motion by Cabral, seconded by Gendreau 4/0/0

B. Review and Act on Relocation of District Administration Offices - Chair Stanton Cross requested to remove this agenda item.

V. **Routine Matters** - Correspondence and Notices - There were none.

VI. **Topics the Chair could not Reasonably Anticipate Forty-eight (48) Hours in Advance of the Meeting** - There were none.

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

Motion by Cabral, seconded by Gendreau 4/0/0

Roll call vote:

Cabral Yes Gendreau Yes Stanton Cross Yes Viveiros Yes

The Regular School Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

MEETING DOCUMENTS

WCS Bill Warrants: 12/29/2023, 1/12/2024

Student Attendance Report by School

Staff Attendance Report

Expansion Proposal: Early Childhood and Family Engagement

Westport Community Schools Projected Budget FY25-FY28, Projected Enrollment FY25-FY28

Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary