

**Westport School Committee
Regular Meeting
DATE: Thursday, March 21, 2024
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: Westport Middle-High School Auditorium**

MINUTES

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

Also Present: Thomas Aubin Superintendent, Lisa Kaminski Director of Curriculum Instruction and Professional Development, John (Jack) Keane Student Representative, Ryan Keane Student Representative, Lori Melo Administrative Secretary, Shelly Morris Athletic Director, Alden Priestner Student Representative, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Melissa Sousa Executive Assistant for Business Services, Anthony Tomah Technology Director, 3 Community Participants

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance - Chair Stanton Cross opened the Regular School Committee Meeting at 6:34 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. Special Agenda – FY25 Education Budget Public Hearing

A. Proposed FY25 School Committee Education Budget -

FY25 Education Budget Public Hearing

Chair Stanton Cross announced the FY25 Education Budget Public Hearing is now officially opened at 6:35 pm. This is an opportunity for anyone to ask questions concerning the budget.

Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any public comments or questions on the budget? There were no public comments at this time.

B. General Discussion of FY25 Proposed Budget -

Chair Stanton Cross informed everyone they will continue on the meeting agenda while the Public Hearing remains open. If any comments arise they will take them.

IV. Informational Agenda

A. Student Representatives:

Ryan Keane reported no school on March 29 in observance of Good Friday, 3rd term ends April 2, April 9 is an Early Release Day, March 27 at 6 p.m. is a grade 8 civics class showcase on town government, a dance will take place on April 26 for grades 5,6, and 7, Spring sports began for middle school baseball and softball.

Alden Priestner reported on Saturday 12 students and 2 teachers arrived from Japan, Friday a Black and White dance will be held with the exchange students, they also have gone ice skating, visited the New England Aquarium, Boston and a P-Bruins Game, Westport's student newspaper The Wildcat will go to press on 3/27, Senior class trip permission slips to Six Flags are due April 9, Jaden Araujo Memorial Scholarship Bowling Fundraiser will be April 28, there are 46 school days left until May 24 the last day for seniors and 72 days until graduation on June 1, congratulations to Colin Nader for earning his pilot's license.

John (Jack) Keane reported sophomore class is selling Wildcat t-shirts, Medical Club is hosting their annual Spring Blood Drive, Drama Club will be performing Sister Act on April 5,6, and 7, tryouts ended

yesterday for tennis, lacrosse, baseball and softball teams, congratulations to the girls' basketball team for their dedication this season, congratulations to students Chris Duarte and Korynne Holden for the Dave Cowens Award and to Korynne for winning the 3 point competition at the Mayflower Conference Hoop Classic.

B. Superintendent Report – Superintendent Aubin reported Westport community district and school representatives met at Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce today to look at a workforce program that models our geotechnical program. They would like to partner with Westport.

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

C. Staff and Student Attendance Reports - Chair Stanton Cross reported that committee members received copies of the reports and asked if there were any comments or statements? There were none.

D. WCS Bill Warrant: 3/22/2024 - Chair Stanton Cross reported bill warrant dated 3/22/2024 in the amount of \$254,630.48 was emailed to school committee members for review. Members also have a hardcopy of the bill warrant.

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

E. ESSER Grant Update – Ms. Rapoza reported they had a Budget Work Shop on the ESSER funds. Ms. Kaminski was invited to provide an update on software and the tutoring program.

Ms. Kaminski explained last year a grant was written for the math software and the state funded half of the cost. This was for grades K-2 and now they want to expand to grade 3 to build on rigor. Ms. Kaminski hopes more funding will continue to support this effort through the state or with grants.

Chair Stanton Cross asked if there were any questions?

Mr. Viveiros mentioned about always changing programs and the problems with not sticking with one. Ms. Kaminski mentioned the district was doing different programs and there is a need to have systematic routines. Ms. Kaminski believes strongly in this program and it hits all parts of the curriculum per DESE.

Chair Stanton Cross announced the FY25 Education Budget Public Hearing concluded here at 6:55 p.m. however she will extend this and have discussion later.

Discussion took place on having data to support the benefits of the program. Ms. Kaminski can share benchmarks.

Costs for grades K,1, and 2 has already been built into the operational budget. The problem with creating a structural deficit and not being able to support grade 3 in the future was a concern.

Ms. Kaminski explained the Ignite Reading Tutoring Program is one-on-one high dosage tutoring. A total of 30 kindergarteners at MAC are tuning into this program now. They would like to pilot this for middle school students with one-on-one tutoring 5 days a week. This would open up 6-8 seats with students on a laptop for 15 minutes a day until they exit the program. The seat can be replaced with another student when another student exits.

Ms. Pacheco shared concerns with students being on screens too much and rather have human contact. Instead of paying \$2,600 per student for this program, she rather work with UMASS Dartmouth students as tutors and pay them a stipend. Ms. Kaminski mentioned transportation was a problem with using UMASS students.

Ms. Kaminski invited school committee members to come in and see the program in action.

Ms. Kaminski offered to come back in May to talk about progress from data meetings and report back on the Ignite Program. Program purchase deadline is August 31.

F. Spring Sports Update – Ms. Morris gave an update on sports and fields. They had a successful registration with 60 athletes participating in Spring sports.

Discussion about logistics of fields took place. Mr. Viveiros was hoping to repaint a new lacrosse field in the old soccer field. Ms. Morris is having conversations about lining the area between the 2 fields. They are working around game schedules.

Mr. Viveiros asked Ms. Morris what she would like to see if money was not an object. Ms. Morris would like to use cost savings from shuttling varsity sports teams to another location to use the fields for a multi playing surface for different sports. Natural turf surface is less maintenance. Chair Stanton Cross advocated for the use of astro turf where the campground area is in the future. Ms. Morris added they could use a storage and concession stand in the middle between the two fields. A shed for storage, tarps, and wind screen around dugouts.

Discussion took place on funding for sports uniforms and the rotation schedule. Ms. Morris has updated the uniforms for basketball, tennis, lacrosse and also purchased golf shirts this year.

Discussion took place on inadequate foul poles at the softball field.

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

Chair Stanton Cross concluded the FY25 Education Budget Public Hearing here at 7:43 pm.

Chair Stanton Cross shared that after meeting with the Finance Committee and the Selectboard a special purpose fund was created for “*Extra Ordinary Special Education Needs*”. The fund is starting with \$50,000 this year, with funds added to it every year from free cash and not from school funds. It will be up to future school committee members to ask for this each year. A total of \$100,000 each year should be requested.

The Finance Committee requested to be involved in the decision making process of this fund. Chair Stanton Cross suggested it should be a joint meeting with the School Committee and the Selectboard for extra ordinary expenditure decisions since FinCom’s role is advisory. Chair Stanton Cross requested a letter be sent to the Selectboard to remove FinCom from the warrant article.

G. Discussion of Fundraiser Protocol - Superintendent Aubin would like to have some control on fundraisers and will prepare a proposal for the next meeting.

V. Action Agenda

A. Review and Act on Minutes of School Committee Meeting – Thursday March 7, 2024 -

A motion was made to approve the School Committee Meeting Minutes for Thursday March 7, 2024.

Motion by Viveiros, seconded by Cabral.

5/0/0

B. Approval of Unified Sports at WES authorizing Mr. Aguiar to remove Chess Club Advisor and replace with Unified Activities Director -

This item should read: Approval to remove Chess Club Advisor and replace with Unified Activities Advisor

A motion was made to approve the removal of Chess Club Advisor and replace with Unified Activities Advisor.

Motion by Gendreau, seconded by Cabral.

5/0/0

C. Review and Act on 3 Year Student Transportation Bid - Ms. Rapoza worked on this 3-year bus transportation bid.

A motion was made to approve the 3 Year Student Transportation Bid
Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Cabral. 5/0/0

D. Review and Act on Wildcat Performing Arts Proposal at WMHS - This proposal is a non-credit course for students in Drama Club and Pep Band.

A motion was made to approve the Wildcat Performing Arts Proposal at WMHS.
Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Cabral 5/0/0

E. Approval of JUUL Settlement funds to purchase e-Hall Pass System for WMHS - Superintendent Aubin reported they received approximately \$2,500. This software keeps track of student activity.

A motion was made to approve JUUL Settlement funds to purchase e-Hall Pass System for WMHS.
Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Cabral 5/0/0

F. Acknowledgement of WEF Grant in the amount of \$1325 for Pollinator Garden at MAC -
A motion was made to approve the WEF Grant in the amount of \$1325 for Pollinator Garden at MAC.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Cabral 5/0/0

G. Acknowledgment of WEF Grant in the amount of \$5435 for the LEAP Summer Enrichment Program at WMHS -

A motion was made to approve the \$5435 WEF Grant for the LEAP Summer Enrichment Program at WMHS.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Cabral 5/0/0

VI. Routine Matters - Correspondence and Notices - There were none.

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

A motion was made on approving a letter be sent to the Selectboard concerning the *“Extra Ordinary Special Education Needs”* fund and removing FinCom from the warrant article and have approval of the School Committee and the Selectboard only for expenditure decisions.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Cabral 5/0/0

On March 27, 2024 at 6 p.m. there will be a Town Meeting Forum.

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

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Gendreau 5/0/0

Roll call vote:

Cabral Yes Pacheco Yes Gendreau Yes Stanton Cross Yes Viveiros Yes

The Regular School Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

MEETING DOCUMENTS

Westport Community Schools Public Hearing for Proposed FY25 School Budget

WCS Bill Warrant: 3/22/2024

Student Attendance Report by School 3.4.24 - 3.15.24

Staff Attendance Reports by School

Recommended Use of ESSER Funds

ESSER Funding FY23-FY24 Budgeted vs. Encumbered/Expended

i-Ready Classroom Mathematics

Ignite Reading

Transportation Bid

Wildcat Performing Arts

JUUL Settlement

WEF Grant of \$1325 for Pollinator Garden at MAC

WEF Grant of \$5435 for the LEAP Summer Enrichment Program at WMHS

Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary