

**Westport School Committee
Work Session
DATE: Tuesday, December 3, 2024
TIME: 5:00 p.m.
PLACE: Hybrid
WMHS 2nd floor Conference Room/Zoom**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82592226354>

MINUTES

Members Present: Gloria Cabral, Evan Gendreau, Jason Pacheco

Members Absent: Melissa Pacheco, Christopher Thrasher

Others Present: Thomas Aubin Westport Community Schools Superintendent, Lisa Kaminski Director of Curriculum, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Lori Melo Executive Secretary, Anthony Tomah Technology Director

I. Call to Order - Chair Evan Gendreau opened the Westport School Committee Hybrid Work Session at 5:00 pm. with a quorum of the members present. There was no attendance on the Zoom link.

Chair Gendreau read the following statement:

On March 29, 2023, Governor Healey signed into law a supplemental budget bill which, among other things, extends the temporary provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2025. Specifically, this further extension allows public bodies to continue holding meetings remotely without a quorum of the public body physically present at a meeting location, and to provide "adequate, alternative" access to remote meetings. The language does not make any substantive changes to the Open Meeting Law other than extending the expiration date of the temporary provisions regarding remote meetings from March 31, 2023 to March 31, 2025.

Chair Evan Gendreau went over the budget numbers. The latest budget figures from the Town remain below level service by about \$500,000. Free cash is \$400,000, new growth \$100,000, contractual obligations \$700,000, and increase in transportation costs \$100,000. The budget will have a shortfall of at least \$45,000.

II. FY26 Budget Discussion

a. Curriculum -

Update History Curriculum at WHS - Ms. Kaminski began by explaining the History textbooks are outdated. They are presently doing an audit of educational technology in the district and looking at use statistics. Results will lead to trimming or reallocating to something more valuable. The goal is to have adequate technology resources. The new history curriculum may be connected to an online component that is renewed every year. They are looking at open sources.

School to Career/Innovation Pathways Coordinator - Ms. Kaminski shared they will have 2 career pathways, Advanced Manufacturing and Health Careers and Social Assisting. They will need a coordinator.

Request for a STEM Department Head for WMHS - Ms. Kaminski shared her past school had many administration positions that allowed for more flexibility. In Westport, administration is lean with a greater need for curriculum support to move the needle in achievement and help students graduate with a plan for life.

Summer School - Ms. Kaminski will submit a budget for summer school.

Grant Writer - Salary absorbed through grants.

Chair Gendreau asked if textbooks will have an online component? Ms. Kaminski stated there would be no textbooks, but rather an open source platform with materials to print. They would need binders for students to collate information.

Chair Gendreau inquired about the school to career position? Ms. Kaminski further explained this position could be a stipend with an existing employee and be paid for with a grant.

Chair Gendreau asked if there were any questions? There were none.

b. Technology - Mr. Tomah explained the number of computers he estimated is based on the number of students. Quantities reflect each building and are the bare minimum to purchase.

Chair Gendreau mentioned having a budget with a set cost for replacements per year and not all at once may be the way to move forward and asked about leasing.

Mr. Tomah explained there are two schools of thought. One is to have costs built into the budget every year. The costs would be normalized by using a lease program and have the same number budgeted every year. Mr. Tomah has worked in districts that have leased and not leased. Lease agreements standardize the budget.

Chair Gendreau asked if there is flexibility if funding is not available when a lease expires? Mr. Tomah explained every lease has a \$1 buyout and you don't need to turn the devices in.

Discussion took place on logistics of computer purchasing and grade level. Mr. Tomah referred to back feeding when grade 9 students get a new Chromebook and keep it through grades 10,11,12 then new Chromebooks are purchased for new incoming grade 9. Mr. Tomah verified this could be done, however expressed last year they lost a tech person and had a hard time to keep up.

Ms. Rapoza shared it may be possible to request Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC) funds.

Mr. Tomah was asked when computers are leased do they need to be set up? Mr. Tomah said yes.

Chair Gendreau asked if the useful life of staff computers would be longer? Mr. Tomah said yes, longer than Chromebooks which have a lifespan of 3 - 4 years.

Mr. Pacheco asked how Chromebooks were purchased last time? Mr. Tomah explained there were ESSER Funds used for the COVID pandemic with students being 1 to 1.

Chair Gendreau asked if all computers were purchased at same time? Mr. Tomah said no they had a large amount at beginning of about 700-800 then added consistently after that.

Chair Gendreau asked what is a rough critical needs replacement number for the computers? Mr. Tomah said at least 150-200 Chromebooks.

Chair Gendreau mentioned the budget falls under level service and may only be able to fund just a portion of his requests.

Mr. Tomah shared they have been consistently utilizing funds collected from breakage fees.

Chair Gendreau asked if there were any questions? There were none.

Mr. Tomah suggests to do a building at a time and shared if no leasing is done there would be a savings of about 8%.

Lightspeed Software - Ms. Rapoza explained this would make the district be in compliance with an upcoming policy and would be protective of the district. The Children's Internet Protection Act was mentioned.

Chair Gendreau shared if the district decides to do a computer replacement program having Lightspeed on all computers would be easier to manage.

Discussion took place on how alerts for inappropriate searches would be handled and who is responsible. Lightspeed is a filtering software with an alert component. An alert is triggered for certain words on school issued devices. It was noted there is a threat assessment team being discussed right now.

Zspace software renewals - Mr. Tomah explained this is for the educational program.

Lightspeed - District wide.

Vertical yearly maintenance /software updates - Keep system up and running and tech support.

ARX ED convocation/sub orientation - Ms. Rapoza explained this is an HR software that does district state mandated training, gets data from other districts on teachers' salaries, contracts, and athletics. This is a one-time purchase.

.5 Business Technology Teacher

Ms. Cabral asked if there is any data on software use? Mr. Tomah said no.

III. **Adjourn** - A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion by Cabral, seconded by JPacheco 3/0/0

The Westport School Committee Hybrid Work Session ended at 6:00 pm.