

**Westport School Committee  
Regular Meeting  
DATE: Tuesday, February 4, 2025  
TIME: 6:30 p.m.  
PLACE: WMHS Auditorium**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Gloria Cabral, Evan Gendreau, Jason Pacheco, Melissa Pacheco, Christopher Thrasher

**Also Present:** Thomas Aubin Superintendent, Jack Keane Student Representative, Ryan Keane Student Representative, Lori Melo Executive Secretary, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, 3 Community Participants

**I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** - Chair Evan Gendreau opened the Regular School Committee Meeting at 6:37 pm. with a quorum of the members present, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Evan Gendreau announced Under MGL Chapter 30A, section 20(f) – This meeting is being recorded.

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

**III. Informational Agenda**

**A. Student Representatives –**

Ryan Keane reported the following for the Middle School - Term 2 report cards were posted to the Community Portal last Friday, February 5 is an early release day, February vacation will be 17-21, January 22 there was a Career Fair for grades 8-12, Westport Middle School Drama production of *Shrek* will be February 13, 14, and 15, and Sophomore class will host a Bingo Night on March 19 from 5-7 pm.

Jack Keane reported the following for the High School - Term 3 is underway and scheduling classes for next year will take place soon, congratulations to seniors for their college acceptances, Student Council News: Seniors send thanks for the purchases of their Calendar Raffle, Junior Class is selling tickets for raffle baskets, Junior Class is hosting a Valentine Cookie Decorating Class February 11, Students That Exemplify Extraordinary Leadership STEEL is hosting a Prom Dress Pop-Up Shop Saturday February 8, High School Drama Club will perform *Into the Woods* March 7-9, Westport High School Advocats and R.I.S.E. are sponsoring the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Jaden Araujo Memorial Scholarship Fund Bowling Fundraiser on April 13, for athletics boys varsity basketball team and girls varsity basketball team scores were reported.

**B. Superintendent Report** – Superintendent Aubin in response to comments on Facebook, shared there are many opportunities for students within the Westport Community Schools and the district is outperforming the state averages in many categories.

On February 13 at 10 am. the Commissioner of Education will be visiting the district. Anyone from the committee is encouraged to attend.

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

**C. Committee Liaison Reports** - Mr. Thrasher reported as the Chair of the Long-Term Building Committee, the study is beginning with site visits starting soon. Mr. Thrasher will continue to report on the progress.

Mr. Pacheco reported there will be a Cable Advisory Board meeting next Wednesday.

Ms. Cabral has nothing new to report.

Ms. Pacheco reported the Capital Improvements Planning Committee CIPC went through a list of items requested and identified each one as a level 1,2, or 3.

Chair Gendreau had nothing new to report.

D. Staff and Student Attendance Reports - Chair Gendreau mentioned that all members received copies of these reports and asked if there were any comments or questions?

Superintendent Aubin noted an uptick in high school absences.

E. WCS Bill Warrants: 1/24/2025 and 2/7/2025 - Chair Gendreau reported bill warrants dated 1/24/2025 in the amount of \$363,552.71 and 2/7/2025 in the amount of \$135,304.90 were emailed to school committee members for review.

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

F. Superintendent Contract - Chair Gendreau reported the committee met in Executive Session and approved amending the date of the Superintendent's Contract to June 30, 2025 due to retirement from the district.

Chair Gendreau asked if there were any comments?

Committee members shared their appreciation of Mr. Aubin's service, advocacy and commitment to the district.

G. Superintendent Search Committee - Chair Gendreau explained they need to identify and start the process of developing a Superintendent Search Committee. Chair Gendreau created a proposal and reviewed the purpose, membership, duties and responsibilities, timeline, meetings, and reporting.

Discussion took place on the size of the Search Committee.

Chair Gendreau stated the committee can send emails with suggestions and there will be a meeting next week to discuss this item further.

Chair Gendreau asked if there was anything else? There was nothing.

H. First Read Policy ADF – School District Wellness Policy - Chair Gendreau reported the amended wording is in blue.

Chair Gendreau asked if there were comments? There were none.

Mr. Thrasher asked a question on the process of First Reads. Chair Gendreau informed everyone First Reads require no action.

I. First Read Policy EFD – School Nutrition Program Charge Policy - Chair Gendreau reported the amended wording is in blue.

Chair Gendreau asked if there were comments? There were none.

J. First Read Policy IMDB – Flag Policy

Mr. Thrasher proposed slight changes to the policy and made a motion to remove the words "to which the strictures of the First Amendment do not apply" in Section II. and add after the word speech "in accordance with Federal and State law". Also add word "official" to any flag representing the Armed Forces.

Discussion took place on these changes.

Mr. Thrasher amended the motion to reflect the sentence in Section II to read “The School Committee authorizes the following flags to be flown on School-owned flagpoles, as an official expression of its government speech”. In addition, remove word “official” to any flag representing the Armed Forces.

After continued discussion, Mr. Thrasher withdrew the motion. A draft on changes will be included within the Second Read of the policy.

K. Competency Determination – The district has not come to a determination on this item.

Superintendent Aubin stated the committee needs to know there will be a 25% cut in Title I, Title IIA and Title 4A.

Superintendent Aubin requested to pass by this item at this time. There is an upcoming meeting with the commissioner.

Mr. Thrasher asked if the commissioner’s meeting will be on policy? Superintendent Aubin reported they will be giving direction.

Mr. Thrasher questioned the budget concern on Title I funding? Superintendent Aubin shared they received word of a 25% reduction in funds at a superintendents meeting. It was noted the whole district is Title I so there would be a considerable reduction in funds.

L. FY26 Budget - Chair Gendreau announced the School Committee’s budget presentation to the Finance Committee will take place next Tuesday February 11, 2025 at town hall. This will be an open meeting.

Chair Gendreau informed everyone there is the “Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2026” included in the committee’s packet that will be used for presentation purposes. Any comments and suggestions can be sent to Ms. Melo. This information will be available on the school’s website next week.

Chair Gendreau asked if there were any comments?

Mr. Thrasher noted that unfunded requests are included in the budget.

Chair Gendreau pointed out slides 9 and 10 outline budget items.

Chair Gendreau noted pages 27-29 on circuit breaker funds points out after deducting the threshold funding is reduced from 75% to 43%.

Ms. Pacheco shared this is an excellent budget presentation. It is outlined with information on what is actually happening to fund the school district for students needs to be successful.

Mr. Thrasher reported the governor’s budget includes 75% for circuit breaker funds and 1 bill to increase the percentage.

M. Playground Communication Board - Chair Gendreau reported the district was approved to receive a Communication Board from the Flutie Foundation. Ms. Miranda and Ms. Tavares put this grant together.

#### **IV. Action Agenda**

A. Review and Act on SC Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 and SC Work Session: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 -

A motion was made to approve the SC Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, January 7, 2025 and SC Work Session for Tuesday, January 7, 2025.

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

B. Review and Act on 25/26 School Year Calendar - Chair Gendreau informed everyone there will be no school on April 14, 2025 due to using the middle high school as a voting place.

A motion was made to approve the 25/26 School Year Calendar.

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

C. Special Education Subcommittee and Appointment of Members - Chair Gendreau mentioned this was discussed at the last meeting but was not formalized. There will be 2 members from the School Committee and both Special Education Coordinators on the committee and they will hold open meetings.

A motion was made to approve the Special Education Subcommittee.

Motion by MPacheco, seconded by Thrasher 5/0/0

Mr. Thrasher and Mr. Gendreau expressed interest in serving on the Special Education Subcommittee.

A motion was made to appoint Mr. Thrasher and Mr. Gendreau to the Special Education Subcommittee.

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

D. Review and Act on First Grade Field Trip to Roger Williams Zoo, Prov. RI – June 2025 -

A motion was made to approve the First Grade Field Trip to Roger Williams Zoo, Prov. RI in June 2025.

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

E. Review and Act on Exchange Club Field Trip to New York City – March 2025 -

A motion was made to approve the Exchange Club Field Trip to New York City in March 2025.

Motion by Cabral, seconded by MPacheco 4/0/1  
(JPacheco abstained)

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 -**

Mr. Thrasher requested an itinerary for the upcoming DESE meeting. Mr. Aubin will send it after final approval.

Chair Gendreau asked the committee for a date next week to discuss the superintendent search. It will be February 12, 2025 at 7 pm.

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

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

Roll call vote:

Cabral Yes Gendreau Yes JPacheco Yes MPacheco Yes Thrasher Yes

The School Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

### Meeting Documents

KP Law eUpdate Federal Executive Orders and Memoranda dated January 31, 2025

Staff and Student Attendance Reports

WCS Bill Warrants: 1/24/2025, and 2/7/25

Superintendent Search Committee  
First Read Policy ADF – School District Wellness Policy  
First Read Policy EFD – School Nutrition Program Charge Policy  
First Read Policy IMDB – Flag Policy  
Westport Community Schools Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2026  
Playground Communication Board Flutie Foundation  
25/26 School Year Calendar -  
Special Education Subcommittee and Appointment of Members  
First Grade Field Trip to Roger Williams Zoo, Prov. RI – June 2025  
Exchange Club Field Trip to New York City – March 2025

*Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary*