

**Westport School Committee
Regular Meeting
PLACE: Hybrid
WMHS 2nd Floor Conference Room
DATE: Thursday March 13, 2025
TIME: 4:30 pm**

Regular Meeting Zoom Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84260532382?pwd=VCQXwtab5rAlbcBysTkk4CRFQ6MagW.1>

Minutes

Present: Amy Arruda, Laura Charette, Lori Melo, Christopher Nunes, Jason Pacheco virtual, Nikki Potter, Christopher Thrasher, Antonio Viveiros, Suzanne Walinski virtual

I. Call to Order - Chair Christopher Thrasher called the first meeting of the Superintendent Search Committee to order at 4:53 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

This meeting is a hybrid meeting and will be followed by an Executive Session.

Chair Christopher Thrasher read the following:

On March 29, 2023, Governor Maura Healey signed into law Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, which includes a two-year extension of the option for public bodies to hold remote meetings, effective immediately. This legislation simply extends the current option for remote meetings through March 31, 2025, and does not otherwise affect the ability of public bodies to conduct their meetings remotely through video and/or audio conferencing under Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021.

- **Introductions** - All attendees introduced themselves.

Christopher Thrasher School Committee member, Christopher Nunes Middle School Band Director, Nikki Potter parent, Amy Arruda Special Education clerk, Laura Charette Middle High School Principal, Lori Melo Executive Secretary, Antonio Viveiros community, Suzanne Walinski School Nurse, Jason Pacheco School Committee member.

- **Discussion of Search Process** -

Chair Thrasher thanked everybody for being part of this process. This group was established by the School Committee to review applications, conduct interviews and present final candidates for the position of superintendent.

Chair Thrasher went over the document that was distributed to the members entitled; *Superintendent Search Process Plan & Expectations*. To date, 10 candidates have applied. The Human Resources Director will look at all the applications, checking for required credentials as per the posted job description.

Chair Thrasher pointed out as part of the search committee expectations there will be strict confidentiality with discussions, interviews, and related materials remaining private. Everyone received a confidentiality agreement to sign and submit.

Chair Thrasher informed everyone Roberts Rules of Order will be used in this process.

Chair Thrasher reviewed the Search Subcommittee makeup which includes 2 School Committee members, President of Westport Teachers Federation, President of AFSCME, 2 administrative staff, 2 district staff members, 2 parent representatives and 2 community representatives.

Potential meeting dates and times will be sent out in a doodle poll to vote on the best options.

At the next meeting, a review of applications and selection of semifinalists for interviews will take place. The meetings going forward will be held in Executive Sessions in person. It was noted that copies of materials can be reviewed during the meeting, 30 minutes before the scheduled time of the meeting, or by making arrangements with Ms. McDaniel in Human Resources. Copies cannot be made and distributed through email.

Interviews will be between 60 - 90 minutes. There will be intro questions by the Chair, each member will have 5 minutes for questions, then 30 minutes at end for wrap-up.

Discussion was held on the questions process. Having a standard set of questions, then ask follow up questions was mentioned as well as having consolidated questions for better coverage.

Chair Thrasher requests all questions to be submitted ahead of time from the members. This will not limit members to just their questions if other things need to be asked. Chair Thrasher would like to have a fair process and ask the same questions as much as possible.

Ms. Charette asked if the candidates will get a copy of the questions ahead of time? Chair Thrasher mentioned coming up with 5 standard questions and not giving out all the questions. This process will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Ms. Walinski asked if there is a set number? Chair Thrasher mentioned at the next meeting this will be decided.

Chair Thrasher reviewed the timeline. Deadline for applications Monday March 24, 2025, set schedule after March 24, next week selection for interviews, interviews March 31 - April 4, select finalists' week of April 7, report at least 3 finalists to School Committee.

Chair Thrasher suggested not to rank the finalists.

Public sessions with the finalists will be set up.

Mr. Nunes mentioned the rigorous timeline and asked if there is a plan B? Possibility a 1-year interim with a more thorough search?

Chair Thrasher confirmed there is a plan B with alternative timelines. The interim question is for determination by the School Committee.

Chair Thrasher asked if there were any questions or follow-ups?

Ms. Potter asked if there are any plans to survey families and staff on what they are looking for in a leader?

Discussion took place on options to do this. Suggestions were made to use categories from the superintendent evaluation form, consolidate information, and use a google form.

Chair Thrasher requested to add this item to the next School Committee meeting agenda.

Chair Thrasher mentioned if there is a question you would like asked send it in and the poll should be ready to go on Tuesday.

Chair Thrasher asked if there was anything else?

Mr. Nunes asked if the search committee will take part in site visits with the finalists? Chair Thrasher mentioned this committee is done after the report is submitted to the School Committee.

Chair Thrasher informed everyone there will be a brief Executive Session after this meeting to go over the candidates.

II. Adjourn - A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion by Christopher Nunes, seconded by Antonio Viveiros

Roll call vote:

Arruda Yes Charette Yes Nunes Yes Pacheco Yes

Potter Yes Thrasher Yes Viveiros Yes Walinski Yes

The Hybrid Westport School Committee Regular Meeting ended at 5:27. p.m.

Meeting Documents:

Memorandum: Superintendent Search Process Plan & Expectations dated March 13, 2025

Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary