

**Westport School Committee  
Regular Meeting  
DATE: Thursday, September 16, 2021  
TIME: 6:30 p.m.  
PLACE: Virtual Meeting**

Please click the link below to join the webinar:  
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**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Michelle Orlando, Melissa Pacheco, Nancy Stanton Cross, Nancy Tavares, Antonio Viveiros

**Also Present:** Kevin Aguiar Assistant Principal Westport High School, Thomas Aubin Superintendent, Laura Charette Principal Westport Middle School, Jennifer Chaves Extended Day Director, Stacey Duquette PreK-Gr.4 Principal, Darren Elwell Director of Curriculum, Michael Grandfield Assistant Principal Westport High School, Kristin McDaniel Human Resources Director, Kerri McKinnon Principal Westport High School, Lori Melo Administrative Assistant, Sean Persico Assistant Principal Westport Middle School, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Elaine Santos Director of Special Education, Anthony Tomah Technology Director, 5 Community Participants

**I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** - Chair Tavares opened the Virtual School Committee Meeting at 6:39 pm. with a quorum of the members present, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Chair Tavares announced:**

**This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, Section 20 and on June 16, 2021 Governor Baker signed an Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency.**

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

**III. Informational Agenda**

**A. Superintendent Report** - Mr. Aubin reported that September 7, 2021 was the first day of school. He is proud of all the work staff have accomplished in order to make it happen. Thanks went out to the public in support of the school district on social media, Leadership Team, WES and MAC staff and Police Department for sending over details at the start of the school year, and to Chief Pelletier and his colleagues. Mr. Aubin also acknowledged Mr. Pacheco Athletic Director, Ms. Rapoza for her work with the buses and cafeteria, Mr. Aguiar for his traffic expertise, Ms. Santos for covering lunches, Maintenance, and Custodial staff.

Leadership Team is meeting with the Police and Fire Departments to solidify an Emergency Operation Plan. Fire drills are scheduled.

Middle School sports teams - Ms. Charette announced the girls had a game. They lost but they worked very hard. Girls in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade are competing with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Mr. Aubin shared they have been struggling with the HVAC system. Mr. Gilchrist is looking into this matter.

Mr. Aubin and Ms. Rapoza met with a company called Meatworks. The district is looking to begin serving locally sourced foods.

Mr. Aubin announced that Mr. Grandfield is working with Mr. Fernandes to provide Infinite Fitness programs in athletics and the arts-program. An online form shows that 35 children are interested in cross country and soccer. The program is called *"Start Them Young"*.

**Ms. Chaves** from the Extended Day Program reported at the start of the program 75 children are enrolled. Enrollment is still ongoing. They are bussing over 30-40 children. The program is located in the MAC pods. Ms. Chaves' goal for the breakfast and afternoon programs is 100 participants.

**Mr. Persico** reported that all students in the middle school have a locker. They need to get more lockers into the 6<sup>th</sup> grade wing. Grade 5 students also have lockers.

**Ms. Duquette** gave credit to teachers and staff for handling the heat and the bees.

**Ms. Rapoza** reported on food and transportation. There are 837 students at the new middle high school. They are serving 520 meals a day. The students have been positive and patient. They are looking to hire 2 more staff at the middle high school. Transportation has been a struggle with substitute drivers. They borrowed people to help serve meals and wash dishes. Ms. Rapoza thanked all the staff for their help.

**Ms. Santos** reported on Special Education. Things are moving smoothly. Self-contained students are all set. Inclusion services are almost complete. Students are well acclimated and teachers want students to be successful. About 48 students chose to home school (down from 92 last year). Approximately 99% of special education students are in school.

**Mr. Elwell** Curriculum Director reported next week will be the first round of diagnostic testing for K-12 in reading and math. Online subscriptions are active and available. Grade 9 Language Based Training has been completed. This program has expanded and is now in Grade 4 and Grade 9. The Administrative Team is reviewing pre MCAS data. Grades 3-8 are using a sampling approach. Gr. 10 is moving towards competency data. Teachers will be designing instruction.

B. Bill Warrant: 9-24-21 - Chair Tavares acknowledged the bill warrant was signed. The bill warrant dated 9-24-21 was in the amount of \$194,550.31 and was emailed to school committee members for review.

C. Acknowledgement of a \$50,000 Grant from the Greater Fall River Development Corporation for Interactive TVs at the MAC and WES - Mr. Aubin reported the district received \$100,000 with 2 separate grants written. Mr. Tomah added they have been working diligently to resolve power and technical issues. Due to delivery issues the monitors are expected sometime in November. This equipment will replace smartboard setups and will have a distance learning camera, a built-in computer and 20-point touch screen. In addition, this equipment will make MAC and WES up to par with the new middle high school.

D. Discussion of Green Communities Competitive Grant – LED Lighting for the MAC and WES - Mr. Aubin mentioned discussion was held at the last meeting. There is no requirement for the district to report out an energy savings. The grant will be submitted and if approved the encumbrance for the difference will be submitted.

E. Update on the Summer Enrichment Programs – D. Elwell - Tabled until next meeting on October 7.

F. Discuss the Playground Design at the WES - Ms. Duquette reported they had companies come and visit the site. They are looking at flooring, color, aesthetics, durability, and appropriate equipment. They need something engaging for ages 5-12 to provide outdoor learning that provides different challenges. A lot of the WES backyard area has been dug up due to the construction activities taking place on the site. Providing something like this is an investment for the students. Mr. Aubin mentioned the use of ESSER III funds and the possibility of other funding that may be available after contacting Senator Rodrigues.

Chair Tavares asked if there were any questions for Ms. Duquette? There were none.

G. Discuss Which Town Boards Receive Stipends – Ms. Rapoza reached out to the Accounting Department at Town Hall. Ms. Rapoza shared her screen showing 4 divisions that receive stipends

including Selectmen, Assessors, Elections & Reg and Board of Health. It was noted that school committee members put in many hours of work, so this information was presented to the committee. Chair Tavares appreciates that this was brought to the committee's attention and that their work is appreciated.

H. Discuss Bus Fees - Tabled until the next meeting for more information.

I. Discuss the American Rescue Plan Act (ESSER III) Funding - Ms. Rapoza shared her screen with a document entitled: **Esser Funding FY22-FY23**. Chair Tavares explained they have had 2 meetings on this topic and asked if there were any questions?

Ms. Pacheco asked if there is anything on this list that may not be approved by the state? Mr. Elwell shared they have an internal process and the grant submission is through a federal grant liaison. The district has compelling narratives and meet overall objectives of ESSER III. **Total grant is \$1,542,137.**

Ms. Rapoza explained some items are for 2 years. For example, custodian, filters, LED lights, and the school enrichment program.

Discussion took place on the list and committee members requested additional time to review all the items. This was tabled and a meeting will be scheduled next week.

J. Mask Mandate Update - DESE has made masks a requirement and will revisit this on October 1 for consideration of possible removal of the mask mandate. The school committee will be working with the Department of Public Health. A total of 201 responses to a survey was received reflecting 92.4% of staff being vaccinated. The survey showed from ages 12-15 - 46.2% are vaccinated with at least 1 vaccine. Ages 16-19 - 67.8 % are vaccinated with at least 1 vaccine. The threshold for mask removal according to the BOH is 80%.

K. Subcommittee Updates - Mr. Viveiros reported the School Building Committee met last night. Chair Dianne Baron has formally resigned from the committee and Mr. Viveiros has been elected the new Chair of the SBC. Mr. Viveiros will continue to focus on building and staff needs, such as additional lockers and tile floors. He will be working hard with Mr. Gilchrist and Mr. Van Voorhis to keep the project moving. Dan Tavares OPM's contract will expire at the end of September, so he will be leaving at the end of the month. Mr. Viveiros thanked both Ms. Baron and Mr. Tavares for all their work. CHA people will still be onboard to finalize the \$95.9 million-dollar project. There have been some hiccups in the project for example the electronic controls, lag with technology equipment due to supply chain issues, gym not completed by the end of September and fire sprinklers on wall needs to be lowered due to new fire codes, attach bleachers and paint floor.

Chair Tavares thanked Dianne Baron for all her hard work and Tony Viveiros for his commitment. Mr. Aubin also thanked Dianne Baron for her time.

## VI. **Action Agenda**

A. Review and Act on Minutes of Tuesday, August 31, 2021 Work Session and Thursday, September 2, 2021, Thursday, September 9, 2021 Work Session -

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of Tuesday, August 31, 2021 Work Session, Thursday, September 2, 2021, and Thursday, September 9, 2021 Work Session -

Motion by Viveiros, seconded by Pacheco

5/0/0

B. Review and Act on Contributing \$34,864 to the Green Communities Competitive Grant for the LED Lighting Replacement for the WES -

A motion was made to approve contributing \$34,864 to the Green Communities Competitive Grant for the LED Lighting Replacement for the WES.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Viveiros

5/0/0

C. Review and Act on Job Descriptions - Tabled

D. Review and Act on Bus Fees - Tabled

E. Review and Act on American Rescue Plan Act (ESSER III) Funding - Tabled

**V. Routine Matters - Correspondence and Notices-** Chair Tavares received a letter from the Planning Board concerning the renaming of the WES to be named the Paul Cuffe Elementary School. There have been conversations in the past on this topic. Betty Slade spoke on the importance, history, and best ways to recognize Paul Cuffe. Chair Tavares would like the committee to think about this. Item will be placed on a future agenda and get more information.

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

**FOLLOW UP ITEMS -**

- Several items were tabled until next meeting.
- Discussion to continue on Planning Board request.

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

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Viveiros

5/0/0

**Roll call vote:**

Orlando Yes Pacheco Yes Stanton Cross Yes Tavares Yes Viveiros Yes

The Virtual School Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

**MEETING DOCUMENTS**

Building Substitutes

\$50,000 Grant from Greater Fall River Development Corporation for Interactive TVs at the MAC and WES

Greater Fall River Development Corporation Educational Fund Application Form

Contributing \$34,864 to Green Communities Competitive Grant for LED Lighting Replacement for WES

Summer 2021 General Academic, Enrichment, and Athletic Offerings

Summer School FY22

Town Boards Stipends

ESSER Funding FY22-FY23

Draft Job Description Director of Social Emotional Learning, Human Resources Assistant, Registrar &

Social Media Administrator

Communication from Planning Board Concerning Recognition of Paul Cuffe

*Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary*