



WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held hybrid (remote/in-person) on **Wednesday, February 9, 2022** via ZOOM Teleconferencing at 115 Amesbury Line Rd., Haverhill, MA per Governor Baker's Act extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency, specifically suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20.

Members Present: Charlie LaBella Chip O'Connor Paul Tucker
Brett Murphy Joseph Haberland Ron Fitzgerald
Richard Early Garry James Scott Wood

Members Remote: Lisa O'Connor, Johanna True, Dave Irving, Jo-Ann Testaverde

Members Absent: Tony LeSage

Others Present: Maureen Lynch, Superintendent
Kara Kosmes, Business Manager
Chris Laganas, Principal

Mr. Murphy stated that the meeting was being recorded and held hybrid (remote/in-person) via ZOOM Teleconferencing. Per Governor Baker's Act extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency. This Act includes an extension, until April 1, 2022, of the remote meeting provisions of his March 12, 2020, Executive Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. Per Governor Baker's extension, the public was not allowed to physically access the meeting. However, Public Comment was made available via email in advance of the meeting start time and/or prior to Public Comment. The meeting was available for the public to view live via: <https://www.youtube.com/c/WhittierTechHighSchool> Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:31 P.M. Mr. Murphy took attendance. All members listed as present were in attendance at Whittier Tech High School. Lisa O'Connor, Johanna True, Dave Irving, and Jo-Ann Testaverde were present remotely via ZOOM Teleconferencing. Mr. Murphy began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance. A moment of silence was held for Russ Riccio, a graphics instructor that passed away. Ms. Lynch spoke about Mr. Riccio's accomplishments at Whittier.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Murphy asked if there was any public comment. There was no public comment.

By motion of Mr. Tucker, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for January 12, 2022 as presented.
Approved by roll call vote - 1 Abstained (S. Wood)

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the Treasurer's Report for January 2022 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business posted.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

There was no student representative report.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of community outreach translators. She also reported on the resignation of a cafeteria worker.

Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that the Executive Subcommittee met earlier in the evening to discuss the FY23 budget and they are recommending a budget increase of 6.74% for next year.

MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that on February 2nd and 3rd, 2022, 11 sophomores retook the Biology MCAS to meet this part of the MCAS/Graduation requirement.

Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. She reported that on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, she attended the Commissioner's ZOOM meeting. The meeting was to discuss the new testing program. Staff and students were able to opt into receiving at home test kits. All staff and students that opted in from Whittier will test on Sunday evenings before coming to school. On Wednesday, January 19, 2022, she had a WHAV Radio interview with Winn. She reported that they have set up time to interview monthly. On Wednesday, January 19, 2022, she attended a COVID webinar. The webinar went over the specifics of the at home test kits distribution plans. On Tuesday, January 25, 2022, she attended the MASSHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board Quarterly meeting. On Thursday, January 27, 2022, NECC Vice President, Dr. Paul Beaudin and Marcy Yeager visited Whittier. They toured the building and discussed how to develop partnerships with one another. On Tuesday, February 1, 2022, she attended the CVTE Partnership Program meeting with Whittier Tech staff. She reported that Whittier is still continuing to work on the pilot program with seniors from the District looking at vocational education. On Tuesday, February 8, 2022, Elizabeth Bennett, Associate Commissioner of Vocational Education visited Whittier's vocational programs. She left very impressed with the faculty and programs. It was a wonderful visit. On Tuesday, February 8, 2022, Ms. Lynch attended the Merrimack Valley Superintendents' Association meeting. They discussed ongoing COVID school issues. Ms. Lynch provided an update on COVID numbers for students and staff and admissions numbers for next year. Ms. Lynch reported that DESE will be lifting the mask mandate on February 28th. Whittier's policy states that the School Committee will determine when to lift the mask mandate. Ms. Lynch did a brief staff survey and approximately 70% of the staff felt like it should be an individual choice. If the mask mandate is lifted, there is concern about those that may still want to wear a mask and how they will be treated by their peers. Ms. Lynch stated that this is something they need to be aware of. Ms. Lynch spoke to Mary Connolly at Haverhill's Health Department. She was aware of DESE's announcement and is in agreement that the COVID numbers have decreased significantly in the City of Haverhill and this is the right time to move forward with lifting the mask mandate.

By motion of Mr. Tucker, seconded by Mr. Early to follow DESE guidance and rescind the mask mandate on February 28, 2022. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

A student advisory initiative presentation was done by Rachael Rossi, Michelle Catena and Kristin Bucco. They provided a presentation through PowerPoint. They provided

information on “why” the Advisory Committee exists; their “vision”; how it works; and feedback from staff and students. There was a brief question and answer session that followed their presentation.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal, provided an update. He reported that the Wrestling Team won the CAC league by knocking off Essex Tech for the first time ever. The Whittier/Amesbury Hockey Team is heading toward the State Tourney. Mr. Laganas reported that Whittier continues to celebrate Black History month. Staff posted and shared a lesson plan/activity for their professional development day. The goal was to research the contributions of African Americans in their content area and create a lesson(s) to teach to their students. All students have completed midterms and they are on the way to Quarter 3. Mr. Laganas congratulated the Guidance Team for the work they do everyday and beyond with the students. Mr. Laganas stated that Whittier has been celebrating and honoring them for National School Counselors Week February 7th - 11th. During winter vacation, Whittier is offering a Boot Camp and Attendance make-up for the four (4) days of vacation from 8 am - 12 pm. The freshmen have chosen their shops and will start in their vocational areas in February and the Guidance Team has been interviewing at the middle schools. Interviews will be done by the beginning of March. The Boosters Club is happy to be back in business selling merchandise and snacks. Mr. Laganas thanked Heather, Ronda and Janice for working/fundraising for student athletes. This year's high school play is “Clue” based on the iconic 1985 Paramount movie which was inspired by the classic Hasbro board game, *Clue*. It is a hilarious farce-meets-murder mystery.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager, provided the bid results for four (4) new school buses for informational purposes. The bid was awarded to DATTCO, Inc., the lowest bidder. Ms. Kosmes provided an appropriation of regional transportation funds in the amount of \$407,263 from the Transportation Revolving Account to fund the purchase of four (4) new buses, new cameras, and a portion of the bus lease payment.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Irving to appropriate \$407,263 from the Regional Transportation revolving account for the items outlined in the Business Manager's memorandum of February 1, 2022. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Kosmes provided the Whitsons Food Service Management Company contract for approval. She reported that the original RFP was for a 5-year period, however the State Bureau of Nutrition requires that the contracts be approved in one (1) year increments.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve Amendment No. 4 to the Food Service Management contract with Whitson's Culinary Group as outlined in the Business Manager's memorandum of February 1, 2022.
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Murphy went over the annual agenda items for March.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee met January 12, 2022 and February 9, 2022.

By motion of Mr. LaBella, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve the minutes of January 12, 2022 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

The Instructional Subcommittee has not met.

The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee met December 15, 2021, January 5, 2022, January 19, 2022 and February 3, 2022 for negotiations with WREA - Teachers Unit.

By motion of Mr. LaBella, seconded by Ms. L. O'Connor to approve the minutes of December 15, 2021, January 5, 2022 and January 19, 2022 as presented.
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

The Policy Subcommittee has not met.

MEETING DATES

The Budget Workshop is March 9, 2022 at 5:30 pm. The Regular School Committee meeting is March 9, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Murphy stated that there is a need to enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the WREA - teachers' union, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee and upon completion of Executive Session will return to open session.

By motion of Ms. L. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. James to enter into Executive Session. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

The Committee went into Executive Session at 7:22 P.M.

Mr. Wood left the meeting.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 7:50 P.M.

Mr. Murphy reported that in Executive Session the School Committee voted to ratify the Tentative Agreement between the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee and the Whittier Regional Educational Association.

By motion of Mr. Tucker, seconded by Mr. LaBella to ratify the Tentative Agreement between the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee and the Whittier Regional Educational Association. Approved by roll call vote - 1 Present (J. Testaverde)

By motion of Mr. LaBella, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to adjourn at 7:52 P.M. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Rand
Recording Secretary