



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, May 10, 2023** via ZOOM Teleconferencing at 115 Amesbury Line Rd., Haverhill, MA per the 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 until March 31, 2025.

Members Present: Greg Noyes Johanna True Scott Wood Chip O'Connor
 Brett Murphy Ron Fitzgerald Garry James
 Dave Irving Richard Early Sandi Coppinger
 George Lay Kurt Slevoski Joseph Haberland

Members Remote: Lisa O'Connor

Members Absent: None

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

Mr. James stated that the meeting was being recorded and held hybrid (remote/in-person) via ZOOM Teleconferencing per the Act extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency. This Act includes an extension, until March 31, 2025, of the remote meeting provisions. Mr. James called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. Mr. James took attendance. All members listed as present were in attendance at Whittier Tech High School. Lisa O'Connor was present remotely via ZOOM Teleconferencing. Mr. James began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. James asked if there was any public comment. There was no public comment. Mr. James asked members to review the school committee directory and let Lisa know if there are any changes.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve the Minutes of the Annual Organization meeting for April 12, 2023 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Noyes, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the Minutes of the Public Hearing on the FY24 Budget for April 12, 2023 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for April 12, 2023 as presented.
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Ms. True, seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve the Treasurer's Report for April 2023 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business posted.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Taylor Leblanc provided an update on sports and activities of the different clubs. Baseball currently has a 6-5 overall record and is 4-2 in the CAC. Softball has a record of 9-1. Their next game is Friday, May 12th against Northeast at home. Girls Lacrosse is having an excellent season. They are currently 5-4 and already have more wins than any other season in Whittier Girls Lacrosse history. Boys Lacrosse is 7-3. They have a very young roster and their core is improving daily. Volleyball has a record of 3-8. They had a game on May 10th against Salem High School. Girls Track is fresh off a win against Northeast last week and continues to post impressive performances. School records have been set in the 100m, 4x100m relay and DMR this season. Boys Track has their next away meet, Thursday May 11th against Shawsheen. Skills USA successfully attended the Massachusetts State Leadership and Skills conference, where students competed to showcase their career and technical education programs. A Whittier sophomore was also elected to a state officer position. Eleven Whittier students advanced to Nationals. Multicultural Club would like to thank Principal Laganas, Assistant Principal Fleming, and the School Board for the wonderful opportunity they had to go to the Peabody Essex Museum last week. They had 18 students attend the trip. It was an incredible experience and corresponds with their goals of embracing the beauty of cultural diversity in the world. They had 8 members collaborate with the Environment Club on its Earth Day Clean up this month! Key Club is working on repainting the hat for the MegaKitty to get it ready for Memorial Day weekend. Some members will also be volunteering to help paint the fence around Bradford Common to get it ready for the Farmers Market this summer. Peer Leadership was invited to collaborate with Student Government and prepare a gift basket that is to be raffled to teachers for Teacher Appreciation Week. Peer to Peer continues to meet bi-monthly and will meet on Thursday, May 11th to continue to brainstorm ideas for their next event.

Interact Club is wrapping up the year with two more volunteer events. They will help serve community meals on May 22nd at the Haverhill Citizens Center and they are helping Team Haverhill with the fence painting project. They also have one of their members attending RYLA, a leadership conference. Chess Club continues to grow with new members. They are poised to have a strong club next year, and they are hoping with more practice to put a 'team' together and compete with other schools! Student Government is getting ready for elections, which will be held in mid-June. They are electing officers for the Class of 2024, 2025, and 2026. Freshmen will be encouraged to attend as general members. They are also planning some fun events for the teachers for teacher appreciation week, which is the second week of May. GSA is planning their annual Pride party for Thursday, June 25th. GSA also received a package of books from a young adult author that they are very excited to add to their rainbow library. Environmental Club had a successful trash pick-up day in celebration of Earth Day. They had 20 kids show up, with help from the chess club and multicultural club. In the end, they filled 20 trash bags worth of trash! They also coordinated with carpentry to build four birdhouses that will be used by the Parker River Clean Water Association to help eastern bluebirds. These birdhouses will be posted in strategic areas to help them lay eggs during their trek up north in the spring/summer. Drama Club has finished meeting for the year. Advisors are currently auditioning seniors for the senior talent show on May 26th. They are looking forward to the event and they have a good group of performers this year! Model UN participated in three competitions this year. Although they have completed their competition season for the school year, they continue to have spirited debates on national and international issues after school in their club meetings. They will also be having an ice cream social for club members before the seniors leave. Art Club has about 30 members meeting each week. Students are working on their graduation caps, ceramics, and canvases. Yearbook Club has sent the yearbook to press and delivery is expected the week of May 22nd, on schedule. DECA is planning for next year. They are brainstorming ways to recruit more freshmen and get more students involved. Poetry Club celebrated poetry month with poems and poets showcased in the hallways and the outdoors electronic display. Ms. Lynch stated that this was Taylor's last school committee meeting as student representative before she graduates from Whittier. Taylor will be attending Endicott College in the fall. Ms. Lynch thanked Taylor for her hard work and wished her well in the future. She presented Taylor with a thank you gift from the School Committee. Mr. Laganas introduced the new student representative, Dawensky Gustave. He is a health assisting student from Haverhill. The Committee welcomed him. Mr. Laganas introduced Kai Reed. He was named the State Outstanding Vocational Student of the Year. Kai spoke about his time

at Whittier and in the Electronics Robotics shop. Kai will be attending the University of Maine. Mr. Laganas introduced Jaidyn Craig, the SkillsUSA President. Jaidyn thanked the Committee and stated that he was honored to represent Whittier on the Executive Board and spoke a little about himself.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of a cafeteria worker, individuals to work in the math grade 10 spring MCAS after school program, individuals to work in the CTI summer program, advisory team members, curriculum facilitators, staff to update history curriculum, individuals to work in the summer employability experience program, individuals to work in the summer MCAS enrichment program, individual to work in the academic online summer school program and individuals to work in the summer attendance school program. She also reported on the resignation of a route bus driver.

Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that as of May 10th, Merrimac, Georgetown, Newbury, Rowley, Groveland, West Newbury and Ipswich have approved the Whittier FY24 budget. The Salisbury town budget meeting is scheduled for May 15th and upcoming meetings with the cities are Amesbury, May 22nd, Newburyport, May 23rd and Haverhill June 5th.

MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that in February 2023, 28 sophomores took the biology MCAS exam. Twenty-one of the 28 students passed the exam. The other seven will retake it again in June 2023. In March 2023, one junior took the ELA MCAS exam and two students took the math MCAS exam. The English student passed and one of the two math students passed. They will be filing an appeal for one junior on the math MCAS exam. Next week, May 16-17 all grade 10 students will be taking the math MCAS exam.

School Building Update

Ms. Lynch reported that teachers and administrators have been meeting with the architects JCJ along with Leftfield. They have been looking at layouts of classrooms and shops. These meetings will continue through Friday, May 12th. Next week, Mr. Early, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Hardy and members of JCJ and Leftfield will be interviewing CMR firms. There are currently five firms being interviewed.

Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. On Thursday, April 13, 2023, Whittier hosted the Rotary Club luncheon. She gave an update on the school building project and about what the students and staff have been up to for this past school year. On Thursday, April 13, 2023, she attended the MAVA Outstanding Vocational Student Award Banquet at Mechanics Hall in Worcester along with Chris Laganas, Amanda Crosby, Paul and Jane Moskevitz. They were thrilled to honor Jayden Craig for this honor. His parents were also in attendance. On Monday, April 24, 2023, she attended the Groveland town meeting. They passed Whittier's budget for the next school year. While she was in Groveland, Ms. Kosmes was in Merrimac. They also passed Whittier's budget for next year. On Tuesday, April 25, 2023, she attended the remote Whittier Massachusetts School Building Committee meeting. It was an opportunity to meet with the MSBA Board and Treasurer Goldberg. At this meeting they voted to move Whittier into the Schematic Design module of MSBA. On Tuesday, April 25, 2023, she attended the Newbury Town meeting along with Kara Kosmes. On Wednesday, April 26, 2023, she was on WHAV Radio with Win. She was able to give a monthly update about Whittier. On Wednesday, April 26th and May 10th, she attended Whittier's weekly executive project meetings. On Wednesday, April 26, 2023, she attended the MSBA Board of Directors' remote meeting. They met with Secretary Goldberg and the MSBA Board of Directors. They gave an update on completing the Feasibility Study and moving towards Schematic Design. On Friday, April 28, 2023, she attended the MAVA SkillsUSA competition at Blackstone Valley. There was also a board meeting for MAVA. On Saturday, April 29, 2023, she attended the SkillsUSA Awards Ceremony. Whittier had 14 students receive bronze medals, five students receive silver medals, and eight students receive gold medals. Whittier also had one state officer elect and two national delegates. On Monday, May 1, 2023, she attended the Georgetown town meeting while Kara Kosmes attended the Rowley town meeting. On Thursday, May 4, 2023, she attended the MASC Day on the Hill. Whittier's culinary students did a fabulous job making delicious desserts for attendees at the State House. On Friday, May 5, 2023, she hosted an area superintendent luncheon at Whittier. They discussed problems of practice. On Friday, May 5, 2023, she attended the Whittier CMR Selection Committee meeting. They developed a schedule to interview five firms next week. On Tuesday, May 9, 2023 and throughout the week, she attended the Whittier User Group meetings along with faculty, and JCJ staff. On Tuesday, May 9, 2023, she attended the Ipswich Town meeting. Ms. Lynch reported that given the in-district acceptances for incoming freshmen, there will be no seats for school choice students for the 2023-2024 school year.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Wood to not allocate seats for school choice for the 2023-2024 school year unless the student began at Whittier and moved out of the District. Unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Ms. Lynch reported that SkillsUSA submitted a field trip request for the gold medal winners to attend the National Conference in Atlanta, Georgia from June 19-24, 2023.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the field trip request for SkillsUSA gold medal winners to attend the National Conference in Atlanta, Georgia from June 19-24, 2023 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal, provided an update. He congratulated the SkillsUSA competitors and advisors for an amazing job at the SkillsUSA Massachusetts State Competition in Marlboro. They brought back seven gold, five silver and 14 bronze medals and one Massachusetts State Officer. Mr. Laganas reported that the gold medal winners will be going to the SkillsUSA National Conference in Atlanta, Georgia from June 19- 24, 2023. He stated the following staff members will be attending with them: Maurreen Lynch, Jane/Paul Moskevitz , Bob Beaton, Dr. Beverly Stickles, Catherine Staunton and Bruce Boisselle. Mr. Laganas thanked everyone that contributed to the Whittier Foundation Kentucky Derby party on May 6th. Mr. Laganas reported that freshmen orientation will be held on May 20, 2023 and awards night will be held on Wednesday May 24, 2023. He stated that the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard will be hosting their STEM Event on Tuesday, May 23rd and Wednesday, May 24th at Whittier. Mr. Laganas provided important dates for graduation/senior activities: May 19th is movie night on the field at 7pm; May 25, 2023 is the mock crash; May 26, 2023 is the talent show; May 30, 2023 is senior sign out; May 30, 2023 is the senior prom at 6 pm; June 1, 2023 is rehearsal/senior awards/luncheon along with distribution of yearbooks and caps and gowns along with a barbeque social; and graduation is June 1, 2023 at 7 pm. Students are to report to the auditorium at 5:30 pm.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager, requested a Capital Outlay transfer of \$695,000 from the General Fund Capital Outlay account to the Capital Projects Special Revenue Fund. She stated that the District was able to utilize grants and other funds to cover needed equipment and repairs this year and this will allow these funds to be

available for the MSBA project as it moves forward.

By motion of Mr. Murphy, second by Ms. True to approve a transfer of \$695,000 from the Capital Outlay account to the Capital Projects Special Revenue fund as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Kosmes requested that the School Committee vote to increase the FY23 general fund operating budget to \$29,243,918. She stated this is an increase of \$900,000; \$750,000 will fund the Stabilization account and \$150,000 will be transferred to the Capital Projects Special Revenue fund to cover the costs associated with the MSBA project. The revenue for the increase will come from the Excess and Deficiency account. There will be no change to the member municipalities' assessments with the transfer.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Irving to approve the increase of the FY23 general fund operating budget to \$29,243,918; an increase of \$900,000 for the purpose of transferring funds to the Stabilization and Capital Projects Special Revenue account from the Excess and Deficiency account as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Ms. Kosmes provided a copy of the bid result for food service for informational purposes. Ms. Kosmes requested approval for Whittier to enter into year one (1) of a five (5) year contract with Whitsons Culinary Group once DESE has completed their review.

By motion of Mr. Murphy, seconded by Ms. True to approve Whittier to enter into year one (1) of a five (5) year contract with Whitsons Culinary Group once DESE has completed their review as presented and set forth in the memorandum from the Business Manager dated May 2, 2023. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Kosmes stated that the school committee members received the audit reports for FY22 in their packets. She stated that the auditors provided a cover sheet with additional information outlined. Ms. Kosmes summarized the key points. She stated the opinion on the financial statements was unmodified, which is a clean opinion and the best you can have; all reporting deadlines were met; information received was accurate; no material weaknesses were found and that the Management letter addressed one item. The auditors recommended that the District consider implementing time and attendance software that integrates with the payroll system. Ms. Kosmes reported that the FY24 budget includes funds for this purpose.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to accept the auditor's reports as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Kosmes provided an update on the Whittier Tech Educational Fund. She reported that on May 6th, the Foundation hosted a Kentucky Derby celebration at the Bradford Country Club. Over 75 people attended. Ms. Kosmes thanked Mr. Wood and Mr. Early for attending the event. The highlight of the evening was the drawing of a \$10,000 raffle prize. There were 294 raffle tickets sold out of 300 for this purpose. Ms. Kosmes stated that it is anticipated that the raffle will net at least \$17,000 for the Foundation's student scholarship fund. On behalf of the Foundation, Ms. Kosmes thanked the event sponsors and everyone who helped support the event in any way. Ms. Kosmes reported that the Barbone's won the raffle and thanked them for their generous donation back to the Foundation.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. James went over the annual agenda items for June. He reported that information for the Superintendent's Evaluation was provided in the packet. He asked that members submit the Superintendent's evaluations by June 1st so the Superintendent's evaluation results can be reviewed at the June meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee has not met.

The Instructional Subcommittee has not met.

The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee met on May 3, 2023.

The Policy Subcommittee met May 10, 2023. They reviewed policies from MASC and they will be brought to the June meeting for a first reading.

MEETING DATES

The Regular School Committee meeting is June 14, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. James stated that there is a need to enter into Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel- 12 month

staff as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee and upon completion of Executive Session will return to open session.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to enter into Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel- 12 month staff as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee and upon completion of Executive Session will return to open session. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

The Committee went into Executive Session at 7:18 P.M. Mr. Wood left the meeting.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 7:29 P.M. Mr. James reported that in Executive Session the School Committee voted on salary increases for the following non-union personnel - 12 month staff:

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve a 3% salary increase for all non-union personnel 12 month staff as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations subcommittee and set forth on the memorandum from the Superintendent dated May 4, 2023. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve a 3% salary increase for the Director of Technology, Director of HR, Business Manager, Comptroller, Director of Pupil Personnel and Director of Community Partnerships as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations subcommittee and set forth on the memorandum from the Superintendent dated May 4, 2023. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve a 3% salary increase plus an additional \$7,500 for the Confidential Secretary to the Principal as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations subcommittee and set forth on the memorandum from the Superintendent dated May 4, 2023. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve a 3% salary increase plus an additional 2% salary increase for the Plant Facilities Manager as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations subcommittee and set forth on the memorandum from the Superintendent dated May 4, 2023. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Murphy, seconded by Mr. Irving to increase the life insurance for active employees to \$10,000 and keep retirees at \$2,000 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Irving to adjourn at 7:35 P.M. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Rand
Recording Secretary