



WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held on **Wednesday, March 13, 2024** at 115 Amesbury Line Rd., Haverhill, MA.

Members Present: Ron Fitzgerald Johanna True Mike Rossi
 Brett Murphy Patty Lowell Donna Holaday
 Scott Wood Richard Early Kurt Slevoski
 Lisa O'Connor Garry James Chip O'Connor

Members Remote: Dave Irving

Members Absent: Sandi Coppinger

Others Present: Maureen Lynch, Superintendent
 Chris Laganas, Principal/Asst. Superintendent
 Kara Kosmes, Business Manager
 Katrina Jensen, Associate Principal

Mr. James, the Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M. Mr. James took attendance. All members listed as present were in attendance at Whittier Tech High School. Mr. Irving, was present via ZOOM. Mr. James began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. James asked if there was any public comment. Mr. James reminded the public they would be allowed up to 3 minutes to present material and begin by stating their name and city/town. Bernie Cullen from Rowley spoke during public comment. He spoke about the budget for the upcoming fiscal year and asked that the budget information be provided on the website as soon as it is made public. Mr. Wood stated that minutes and agenda are posted on the website and the public hearing on the budget is the time for the public to speak.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Ms. O'Connor to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for February 13, 2024 as presented. Motion Approved by roll call vote - Unanimous with change to spelling of last name of Newburyport City Councilor Khan.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve and release the minutes of the Executive Session meeting for February 13, 2024 as presented. Motion approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

By motion of Ms. True, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the Treasurer's Report for February 2024 as presented. Motion Approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business posted.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Dawesnyk Gustave provided an update on sports and the activities of the different clubs. Boys Basketball concluded a tough season with a 5-15 record. After qualifying for the state tournament the last 2 seasons, the basketball program underwent a rebuilding year this season. Girls Basketball ended the season playing state powerhouse Dedham High School in the State Tournament. They played an awesome game leading at times. Their hopes were lost when foul trouble hit them and they ended up losing by 10. Coach Bradley couldn't have been more proud of his team as they fought right to the end. Wrestling concluded their season as the runners-up in the Division 2 North section, and Coach Richards was honored as the Division 2 North Coach of the Year. The team achieved notable success at the sectional tournament, securing seven placements and earning qualification for the Division 2 state tournament. The girl's team attained a commendable 6th place overall out of 42 teams at the state tournament, with six girls qualifying for the All-State Tournament. The hockey team had a remarkable season losing to Auburn High School in the state tournament. The Chess club is going strong. They have been meeting every Tuesday and membership continues to grow. There has been interest in competing outside of school, reaching out to the MHSCCL (Massachusetts High School Chess League), which hosts tournaments throughout the area. SkillsUSA has 173 students representing all of the various shops who will be participating in the March 14th District Conference at Whittier. Students who place Gold & Silver qualify to participate in the State Leadership conference at the end of April. The MultiCultural club is making plans for their first ever Culture Night at the school on Friday, March 22nd from 4:30-6:30 pm, before the school play. Students are adopting a country or culture of their choice to showcase to the Whittier community. They are anticipating a colorful, cheerful celebration of music, beauty, information, and treats to explore and try. The Interact Club is working on Easter cards for Haverhill nursing homes.

Student Government hosted a student versus faculty basketball game after school on Tuesday, March 12th at 2:05 pm. The Ski club had their last trip Sunday March 3rd to Sunday River, Maine. They had 47 students attend along with four advisors. A good season was had by all. The Robotics Club has students participating after school. They are soldering projects and learning programming with Shield Bots. The Environmental club was able to rehab the tower garden in the Poet's Inn. They planted new seedlings and saved some of the plants. They have also planted and set up a second tower for the Poet's Inn, all in hopes to allow the kitchen to use fresh produce and herbs for cooking. The group has also finished making posters for the plastic collection drive, which should start soon. The plastic will be recycled into eco bricks and donated to a local collection center. The Whittier Tech Drama Club's production of the musical *Mean Girls: High School Edition* will premiere on Friday, March 22nd at 7pm in the auditorium. There will also be performances on Saturday, March 23rd at 7pm and Sunday, March 24th at 2:00pm. Tickets to the show can be purchased in advance for \$8 online or at the school store. They can also be purchased at the door for \$10 on the day of the event. The students have worked very hard on this production and are so excited for everyone to see it! Students in the Art Club have been creating ceramics work as well as illustrations. There has also been some finishing work on the flats for the *Mean Girls* musical. The yearbook ad section generated over \$5,000 in revenue which will be applied directly to the cost of printing. The majority of the pages have gone to press, and the remaining few pages will go out by the end of the month. The book is on time and on budget. The Poetry Club will be entering a Young Writers' Power of Poetry contest.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of a route bus driver, a 7D van driver, a guidance counselor, math acceleration academy facilitator, math acceleration academy instructors, early college assessment reviewers, February vacation bootcamp instructors, financial literacy program advisors and spring coaches for 2023-2024. She also reported on the resignations of a teaching assistant, guidance counselor, maintenance mechanic and physical education/health instructor.

Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that a budget workshop was held March 13th. At that workshop, they discussed a budget which contained a 2.59% increase. The public hearing for the FY25 budget is scheduled for Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 6:45 pm.

MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that On March 7th and 8th, 4 juniors took the math MCAS retest. On March 26th and 27th, all grade 10 students will be taking the English MCAS for their graduation requirement.

Superintendent Update

Ms. Lynch reported that on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, she attended the Mayor's Hope Task Force meeting online. This is a group of Haverhill stakeholders working together to look at support services and outreach for those having addiction issues. On Wednesday, February 28, 2024, she attended the Groveland Fincom meeting along with Kara Kosmes. This was a great opportunity to share some preliminary budget information and discuss how to move forward from the failed building project vote. On Monday, March 4, 2024, she met with Jason Naves, a selectman from Groveland. He was able to give her some feedback on the Whittier Tech building project. On Tuesday, March 5, 2024, she met with Peter Erickson of Newbury. He has shown a real interest in Whittier Tech. She has asked him to be on the advisory Committee for CAD. On Thursday, March 7, 2024, she attended the MASS Executive Committee meeting at the Royal Plaza in Marlborough. They discussed school funding, a literacy bill and a new school discipline bill. On Friday, March 8, 2024, she met with Carl Nylen, a selectman from Ipswich. He also provided feedback on the failed project vote. On Wednesday, March 13, 2024, she attended the Legislative Breakfast at Valley Collaborative. This was an opportunity to meet with local legislators and discuss budget concerns and the 1.9% inflation rate for Chapter 70 funds, the literacy bill, and again the discipline bill. Ms. Lynch reported that they continue to have discussions about how to move forward as a district. There are no answers right now. They are continuing to meet with local and state leaders to find a path forward whether that is renovations and code updates or putting forth another Statement of Interest to MSBA. She stated they certainly want to work with anyone that is interested in helping form Whittier's path forward. She asked anyone that is interested, to please contact her.

Ms. Lynch reported that the Student Opportunity Act requires each district to create an evidence-based plan for reducing persistent disparities in achievement across student groups, including English learners, students with disabilities, and low-income students that must be submitted for the Commissioner's review on a three-year cycle. As with the initial three-year Student Opportunity Act Plans, DESE also requires that the local School Committee vote on each District's 2024 Student Opportunity Plan prior to submission. Ms. Lynch reported that the Student Opportunity Plan was provided in the school committee packet for approval. Ms. Holaday asked that abbreviations not be used unless spelled out and on page 33 use "we will".

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve the Student Opportunity Act Plan for 2024-2027 with recommended changes. Motion approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

Ms. Lynch stated she has an out of state field trip request from marine technology to go to Chislett's Boating, 35 Industrial Park Drive in Dover, NH on March 25, 2024 and March 28, 2024. She requested approval from the School Committee.

By motion of Ms. Holaday, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the out of state field trip request from marine technology to go to Chislett's Boating, 35 Industrial Park Drive in Dover, NH on March 25 2024 and March 28, 2024. Motion approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

Ms. Lynch thanked Mr. James for all he has done for Whittier Tech and the students during his tenure. She wished him the best of luck.

PRINCIPAL/ASST. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal/Asst. Superintendent, provided an update. Mr. Laganas reported that the winter sports season has wrapped up and he congratulated student athletes and coaches for their hard work and dedication. The winter sports banquet will be held on March 14th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Mr. Laganas thanked the Booster Club for their efforts in organizing events for the students in the athletic programs. Spring sport teams will begin on Monday, March 18th. The second annual student versus faculty basketball game was held on Tuesday, March 12th after school. This event was put on by the Student Government. It was a fantastic event! On March 14th, SkillsUSA will have 173 students, representing all 23 vocational areas, participate in the District 4 Qualifying Exam. The District online testing event will take place at Whittier. All week 2 freshmen start their shops on March 13th. Saturday school for attendance make-up begins on Saturday, March 16th from 8:00 am - 12:00 pm. Students who have 10 or more absences can make up their days beginning March 16th through June 8th. There will be no Saturday school on May 25th. The Whittier Tech Community Career Fair will be held in the gymnasium on Thursday, March 21st from 6:00 PM-8:00 PM. This Career Fair is open to all seniors at Whittier and from the 11 sending cities and towns. Over 50 companies, representing all trades within the Whittier Tech District, will be in attendance. Mr. Laganas thanked Amanda Crosby, Vocational/Technical Coordinator for putting this event together. Whittier's Spring Performance for "*Mean Girls*" (the high school version) is starting March 22nd and again on March 23rd, from 7:00-9:00 PM and also on Sunday, March 24th from 2:00 PM-4:00 PM. Tickets are on sale now. Please visit the Principal Laganas Weekly Updates page where you will see

the link on page 5 to purchase tickets ahead of time for \$8.00. Tickets will also be sold at the door for \$10.00. The Multicultural Club and DEI Program are joining forces to host "Culture Night" before Whittier Tech's Spring Performance on Friday, March 22nd from 4:30-6:30 PM in the Main Lobby of the school. During this event, people of all ages can taste, see, and enjoy a display of various cultures from within the Whittier Community. The Guidance Team is wrapping up interviews for the incoming 9th grade class. Decisions will be made near the end of month. Mr. Laganas reported that prom is Tuesday, May 28th at the Blue Ocean Event Center in Salisbury. He also reported that graduation is Thursday, May 30th. Sophomores will take the English MCAS exam on March 26th and 27th. It will be a reverse half day for grades 9, 11 and 12. Notification will be sent out to parents/guardians. Report cards for term 3 will be issued on Friday, March 29th.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager requested approval of the Whitsons Food Service Management Company contract Amendment No. 1 that was provided in the school committee packet. She reported that the original RFP was for a five-year period, however the State Bureau of Nutrition requires that the contracts be approved in one year increments, therefore this request is for year two of the contract.

By motion of Ms. True, seconded by Ms. Lowell to accept Amendment No. 1 of the Food Service Management contract with Whitsons Culinary Group as presented by the Business Manager. Motion approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

Ms. Kosmes reported that on February 20, 2024, the District received notification that its Excess and Deficiency Fund was certified for FY22 in the amount of \$1,157,568 by the Department of Revenue.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. James, reported on the annual agenda items for April. He also stated that to date only four self-evaluation forms have been completed. He reminded members to go online and complete the forms by April 1, 2024.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee met February 13, 2024.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve the minutes of February 13, 2024 as presented. Motion approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

The Instructional Subcommittee has not met. They will meet on April 3, 2024 at 6 pm. The Plant Operations Subcommittee met on March 13, 2024. They will meet on April 3, 2024 at 5 pm.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee met on February 14, 2024. They have minutes to approve from January 30, 2024 and February 14, 2024.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Slevoski to approve and release the Executive Session minutes of January 30, 2024 as presented. Motion approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Slevoski to approve the minutes of February 14, 2024 as presented. Motion approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

The Policy Subcommittee met on February 13, 2024. Policies that were reviewed at the February 13th meeting were provided in the school committee packet for a first reading.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve the minutes of February 13, 2024 as presented. Motion approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms. Holaday to approve the following policies for a first reading: AB- The People and their School District ; AC-Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation; AC-R-Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation; ACA- Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex; ACAB- Sexual Harassment; AD - Mission Statement; ADC-Tobacco Products on School Premises Prohibited; BA- School Committee Operational Goals; BBAA - School Committee Member Authority; BBBC- School Committee Member Resignation; BDFA- School Councils; BHE- Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members; BIBA - School Committee Conferences, Conventions, and Workshops; BJ-School Committee Legislative Program; CA-Administration Goals; CB-Regional School Superintendent; CBD- Superintendent's Contract; CBI-Evaluation of the Superintendent; CCB-Staff Relations; CE-Administrative Councils, Cabinets and Committees; CH-Policy Implementation; CHCA-Approval of Handbooks and Directives; CM-Regional School District Annual Report; EB-Safety Program; EBB-First Aid; EBC-Emergency Plans; EBCD-Emergency Closings;

EBCFA-Face Coverings; EC-1 Regional School District Buildings and Grounds Management; ECA-Buildings and Grounds Security; ECAF-Security Cameras in Schools; EEAE-School Bus Safety Program; EEAEB- Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus and Commercial Vehicle Drivers; EEAEC- Student Conduct on School Buses; EEAJ- Motor Vehicle Idling on School Grounds; EFC-Free and Reduced Price Food Services. Motion approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

MEETING DATES

The Annual Reorganization meeting is Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 6:30 pm.
The Public Hearing on the FY25 budget is Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 6:45 pm.
The Regular School Committee meeting is Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 7:00 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session posted.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to adjourn at 7:26 P.M.
Motion approved by roll call vote - Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Rand
Recording Secretary

The following list of documents and/or exhibits were used:

School Committee minutes 2-13-24
Executive Session minutes 2-13-24
Treasurer's Report February 2024
Student Opportunity Act Plan 2024-2027
Whitsons Contract Amendment No. 1
Executive Subcommittee meeting minutes 2-13-24
Salary Negotiation Subcommittee meeting executive session minutes 1-30-24
Salary Negotiations Subcommittee meeting minutes 2-13-24
Policy Subcommittee meeting minutes 2-13-24
Policies for first reading AC; AC-R; ACA; ACAB; AD; ADC; BA; BBAA; BBBC; BDFA; BHE; BIBA;
BJ; CA; CB; CBD; CBI; CCB; CE; CH; CHCA; CM; EB; EBB; EBC; EBCD; EBCFA; EC-1; ECA;
ECAF; EEAE; EEAEB; EEAEC; EEAJ; EFC