



WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held remotely on **Wednesday, April 14, 2021** via ZOOM Teleconferencing per Governor Baker's Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20.

Members Present: Ron Fitzgerald Tony LeSage Chip O'Connor
 Richard Early Lisa O'Connor JoAnn Testaverde
 Brett Murphy Johanna True
 Dave Irving Garry James

Members Absent: Paul Tucker, Ben Fichera, Charlie LaBella, Scott Wood

Others Present: Maureen Lynch, Superintendent
 Kara Kosmes, Business Manager
 Chris Laganas, Principal
 Patrica Lowell, Director of Pupil Personnel

Mr. Murphy stated that the meeting was being recorded and held remotely via ZOOM Teleconferencing. Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 20, 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 6:30 P.M. Mr. Murphy took attendance. Mr. Murphy began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. James to approve the Minutes of the Budget Workshop meeting for March 10, 2021 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. LeSage to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for March 10, 2021 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the Minutes of Executive Session for March 10, 2021 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. James to accept the Treasurer's Report for March 2021 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Murphy reported that he has received eight school committee self-evaluation forms to date. He asked members that have not passed one in to do so as soon as possible so he can go over the results at the May meeting.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

There was no student representative report.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of two (2) electrical instructors, two (2) route bus drivers, a cafeteria cook, a medical assisting instructor LTS, IDEA special education improvement hires, curriculum design team facilitators, ELL instructor to provide SEI or ESL training, attendance makeup monitors and fall II coaches for 2020-2021. She also reported on the resignation of a teaching assistant - vocational.

Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that the Public Hearing on the FY22 budget was held April 14th and the budget books will be distributed to cities and towns.

MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that Whittier is preparing all grade 10 and 11 students for the ELA and math MCAS exams that are scheduled for May 11th, 12th, 18th, and 19th. Grade 9 students are preparing for the biology MCAS scheduled for June 8-9, 2021.

Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. She reported on March 12, 2021, she attended the North Shore Superintendents' Roundtable remote meeting with local legislators discussing school finance and COVID financial concerns. On March 17, 2021, she attended the Merrimack Valley Chamber Board of Directors' virtual meeting. On March 23, 2021, she attended a call with Jeff Riley, DESE Commissioner. This was their quarterly meeting. A draft of new admissions regulations will be brought forward to the Board at DESE's meeting on April 20th. On March 25, 2021, Dr. Justin Bartholomew, Superintendent of Pentucket came to Whittier. Pentucket Regional borrowed some old tables and chairs that they plan to use at their high school. On March 29, 2021, she attended the remote West Newbury Finance Committee meeting along with Kara Kosmes. They updated the Finance Committee on Whittier's budget and where Whittier is in the MSBA process. On March 31, 2021, she attended the remote MAVA Officers' meeting with Elizabeth Bennett. DESE is planning to have schools submit Admissions and Waitlist data bi-annually. They were able to review the data tool and make some suggestions at the meeting. On April 5, 2021, she attended the remote MSBA meeting along with Kara Kosmes and Beverly DeSalvo. They received confirmation from MSBA that Whittier will be moved forward in the Feasibility Stage at the June MSBA meeting. On April 9, 2021, she attended a remote MSBA meeting. At that meeting they refined what Whittier would be looking for as far as enrollment and have landed on a school for 1400 students. On April 13, 2021, she attended a remote MVSA meeting. At that meeting they continued to discuss MCAS concerns for the school year. The Principal and senior class officers are developing a plan to have two (2) proms with a maximum capacity of 150 students per night. Whittier will meet all CDC guidelines at the two (2) events. Graduation plans are coming along. As with everything else this year, Whittier will be prepared to pivot based on guidance and trajectory of the virus in the community. Mr. Williams showed a quick video to the School Committee of some of the changes that have been made at Whittier for safety. Ms. Lynch stated that the family of Herchel (Wayne) Duane Glover is donating a \$1,000.00 scholarship (a Home Depot Card) to benefit a graduating Whittier Tech senior to help with tools that would further their career in one of the various trades. Ms. Lynch thanked the family of Herchel (Wayne) Duane Glover for this generous scholarship and requested the School Committee's acceptance.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. James to accept the \$1,000.00 scholarship (a Home Depot Card) from the family of Herchel (Wayne) Duane Glover to benefit a graduating Whittier Tech senior as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Patricia Lowell, Director of Pupil Personnel Services provided an Admissions Update. She provided a report of District applications for April 2019, April 2020 and April 2021. She reported that this year 562 applications were processed compared to 593 last year. Challenges due to the pandemic restricting access to tours and Discovery programs at Whittier only slightly reduced interest. She reported that 399 applicants have been initially accepted for a possible 350 seats for the Class of 2025. She stated that as of April 14th, 329 students have indicated that they will enroll at Whittier.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal provided a principal's update. He reported that the vocational students have been all in for weeks and have been successful. On April 26th, after the April break, Whittier will be "ALL IN" person. Mr. Laganas reported that Freshman Orientation will be May 15th, Awards Night May 20th, May 25th and May 26th the senior Formal and June 3rd graduation with a rain date of June 5th. Spring sports will begin on April 26th. The fall II season was a success. Mr. Laganas thanked all the coaches and students for making it work and following all protocols. The Booster Club is back. They are making money for Whittier athletes by selling sweatshirts and pins. They are coming up with creative ways to make money. No food is allowed to be sold. Mr. Laganas thanked Ms. McNulty and Mrs. Russo for all their efforts. Grab-and-Go meals are still available at the end of the school day for students who wish to have meals available for their remote and weekend days. Monday pick-up for breakfast and lunch will continue to be available every Monday from 10 am to Noon at the Poet's Inn entrance. Meals will be provided for 7 days. Virtual Clubs are transitioning back to in-person. Beginning April 26th, late buses are back for Tuesdays and Thursdays. Mr. Laganas reported that during live stream morning announcements students have been asked trivia questions thanks to Patty Lowell. They have also been showcasing different vocational areas each morning by live streaming from those areas. Mr. Laganas thanked Ms. Lowell and Mr. Porcelli for being there every morning for the staff and students dancing and producing the show. It was a lot of fun!

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager provided the Variance Analysis for July 1, 2021 - March 31, 2021 according to the Annual Agenda. Last month a transfer was approved that aligned several accounts that had negative balances. She also provided bid results for informational purposes for the purchase of two (2) new school buses. Ms. Kosmes reported that a memo was provided to school committee members in their packets to request approval to appropriate \$158,892 from the Transportation Revolving

Account to purchase two (2) new buses, 1 replacement van and costs associated with Special Education Transportation.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms. O'Connor to appropriate \$158,892 from the Regional Transportation revolving account to cover the cost of two (2) replacement school buses, one (1) replacement van and costs associated with Special Education Transportation as outlined in the Business Manager's memorandum dated April 1, 2021. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

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

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 March 24, 2021.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. James to approve the minutes of March 24, 2021 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

The Policy Subcommittee met April 14, 2021. They will meet again at 6:15 pm on May 12, 2021.

MEETING DATES

The Regular School Committee meeting is May 12, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Murphy stated there is a need to enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining - Support Staff Association, to conduct contract negotiations with non-union personnel - Administrators, Director of Technology & Information Systems, Human Resource Director/Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Business Manager and Superintendent and 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 School Committee and upon completion of Executive Session will return to open session.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. James to enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining - Support Staff Association, to conduct contract negotiations with non-union personnel - Administrators, Director of Technology & Information Systems, Human Resource Director/Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Business Manager and Superintendent and 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 School 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 7:11 P.M.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 7:33 P.M.

Mr. Murphy reported that in Executive Session the School Committee voted on a one-year contract extension and 2.5% salary increase for the Support Staff Association; a one-year contract extension and 3% salary increase for Administrators; contract renewals and salary increases for the Director of Technology & Information Systems, HR Director/Admin Asst to the Supt., Business Manager and Superintendent and salary increases for non-union personnel – 12 month staff as well as a one-time COVID hazard payment for maintenance staff.

By motion of Mr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. James to approve a one-year contract extension with a 2.5% salary increase for the Support Staff Association as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations Subcommittee. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. James to approve a one-year contract extension with a 3% salary increase for Administrators as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations Subcommittee. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. James to approve the proposed 3 year contract renewal and 3% salary increase for the 2021-2022 school year for the Director of Technology & Information Systems as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations Subcommittee. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. James to approve the proposed 3 year contract renewal and 3% salary increase for the 2021-2022 school year for the HR Director/Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations Subcommittee. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms. O'Connor to approve the amended contract for the Business Manager and 3% salary increase for the 2021-2022 school year as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations Subcommittee. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. James to approve the proposed 5 year 5 day contract renewal for the Superintendent/Director as approved by the Salary Negotiations Subcommittee. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. James to approve salary increases for non-union personnel per the Superintendent's memo dated April 7, 2021 for the 2021-2022 school year along with salary increases for the Comptroller, Plant Facilities Manager, and Director of Community Partnerships which were approved by the Salary Negotiations Subcommittee. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve a one-time COVID hazard work payment of \$5,000 each for the maintenance staff for this school year (2020-2021) as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations Subcommittee. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to adjourn at 7:40 PM. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Rand
Recording Secretary