



## WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

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A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held remotely on **Wednesday, September 9, 2020** via ZOOM Teleconferencing per Governor Baker's Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20.

Members Present: Charlie LaBella Ron Fitzgerald Ben Fichera  
Richard Early Lisa O'Connor JoAnn Testaverde  
Brett Murphy Johanna True Chip O'Connor  
Dave Irving Garry James

Members Absent: Paul Tucker, Scott Wood, Tony LeSage

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

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. Irving, seconded by Dr. Testaverde to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for August 12, 2020 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LaBella, seconded by Mr. James to accept the Treasurer's Report for August 2020 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 a dental assisting instructor, history instructor, working forer, teaching assistants, a part-time library assistant, building substitutes, power school trainers, cluster chair/department heads and instructors for the evening school program for fall 2020. She also reported on the resignations of two (2) bus drivers, a cafeteria worker and a plumbing and heating instructor.

### Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager would be presenting a budget update later in the meeting.

### MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that there is no MCAS update at this time. However, during a remote meeting with the Commissioner earlier in the day, he stated that there will be MCAS testing in the spring.

### Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. She reported that on Thursday, August 13, 2020, she attended the MAVA Superintendent and Directors' remote meeting. On Tuesday, August 25, 2020 and Wednesday, August 26, 2020, new teachers reported to school. There were five (5) teachers that participated in the new teacher induction program this

year and three (3) of them were Whittier Tech graduates. On Thursday, August 27, 2020, she attended the MAVA Superintendent and Directors' remote meeting. On Thursday, August 27, 2020, she attended the Newburyport City Council remote meeting. They were able to review the budget from March to August. On Monday, August 31, 2020, all teachers reported to school. On Wednesday, September 2, 2020, she attended the Commissioner's remote meeting. He gave an update on state guidance with schools reopening. On Thursday, September 3, 2020, she attended the MAVA Superintendents'/CTE Directors' remote meeting. On Tuesday, September 8, 2020, she attended the MVSA remote roundtable meeting. On Wednesday, September 9, 2020, she attended the Commissioner's remote meeting. Ms. Lynch recommended that the fall sports season be postponed to the floating season in February and March. She knows this is a disappointment for many but the focus at this time needs to be on returning to school safely and once that has been done safely and effectively the extra-curricular activities will be added.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to postpone the fall sports season to the floating season in February and March. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Lynch reported on the lunch program and how to implement it safely. She stated that right now, the City of Haverhill is coded "Yellow" by the State DPH. While it is yellow it seems the right thing to do would be for students to leave early and eat at home. Whittier would provide students with a grab and go lunch and they would be able to eat lunch at home, not on the bus. She stated this would be re-evaluated every two (2) weeks.

By motion of Ms. True, seconded by Dr. Testaverde to give the Superintendent the flexibility to adjust the lunch schedules and allow the students to leave early as needed for the 2020-2021 school year. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Lynch reported that there are approximately 100 students that will be remote only and Whittier will be contracting with a company provided by the State to provide this remote learning. There are two (2) teachers that will be fully remote and overseeing this program. Ms. Lynch asked families to commit to ½ year of remote instruction and at that time maybe some of the students will return to school for instruction.

Ms. Lynch provided her goals for the 2020-2021 school year. These goals are in line with the Re-opening plan that was submitted to DESE and approved by the School

Committee. Ms. Lynch added to the Facilities Goal that she will continue to work with MSBA and Whittier's 11 communities on the building project.

By motion of Ms. L. O'Connor, seconded by Dr. Testaverde to accept the Superintendent's goals for the 2020-2021 school year. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal provided an update. He reported that August 31st was the first day back for staff for the in-person professional development hybrid model. The auditorium was split up into two groups; a morning session and afternoon session. In-person hybrid professional development days will continue through September 15th. Training included: Powerschool (new information system), Hot works (certification for certain trade areas), vocational training, online class for social emotional and academic growth, technology carousel using Google Doc sheets, department meetings and Friday, September 11th, there will be a presentation on Cultural Sensitivity by Dr. Adolph Brown. Freshmen and new students start on September 16th. Group A will come in the morning and Group B will come in the afternoon. Students will go to their cohort areas and remain there to be oriented on schedules, freshman exploratory, iPad distribution and building navigation. On Thursday, September 17th, all Group A students will be at the school and on Friday, September 18th, all Group B students will be at the school.

## BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager provided a revised FY21 Budget for approval. She reported on April 8th, the School Committee approved a total budget of \$27,559,456 which represented a 6.3% increase that was primarily driven by the 11.24% increase in Whittier's FY21 Chapter 70 increase. As a result of the economic realities facing the State of Massachusetts due to the outbreak of COVID 19, the DESE was forced to revisit its allocation of Chapter 70 funds to school districts and were told to anticipate significant decreases in funding. In response, the Administration reduced staff and froze expense budgets, and the School Committee approved usage of \$500,000 of the District's Excess and Deficiency funds to help offset the anticipated loss in revenue. On August 10th, the revised Chapter 70 funds were released to the State. Whittier's funding was reduced by \$516,495 and member assessments were decreased by \$257,329. In total, the salary budget was decreased \$995,574. It was done by eliminating some programs, shifting several salaries to grants, redeploying staff, and not

filling new or vacated positions. As a result, there will be no need to use the \$500,000 in Excess and Deficiency funds that were voted in June. The revised budget results in an overall increase of 2.48% to Whittier's FY21 budget, and an average .82% decrease to community assessments from FY20.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Dr. Testaverde to approve the adjusted FY21 Revised Budget in the amount of \$25,868,882.00. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Murphy went over the annual agenda items for October. The Annual Organizational meeting was tentatively rescheduled for September. Mr. Murphy would like to postpone it.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Early to move that the Annual Organizational meeting be postponed to Monday, April 12, 2021. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

#### SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee has not met.

The Instructional Subcommittee has not met. They will set a meeting date at the October meeting.

The Plant Operations Subcommittee met August 12, 2020.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. LaBella to accept the minutes of August 12, 2020 as presented. Approved by roll call vote - 1 Abstained (L. O'Connor)

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee met September 2, 2020.

The Policy Subcommittee has not met.

#### MEETING DATES

The Regular School Committee meeting is October 14, 2020 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 conduct contract negotiations with non-union personnel – Director of Pupil Personnel and 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 School Committee and upon completion of Executive Session will return to open session.

By motion of Dr. Testaverde, seconded by Mr. James to enter into Executive Session. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

The Committee went into Executive Session at 7:15 P.M.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 7:31 P.M.

Mr. Murphy reported that in Executive Session the School Committee voted on the Director of Pupil Personnel's contract and salary increases for non-union personnel – 12 month staff.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Dr. Testaverde to approve the proposed three (3) year contract for the Director of Pupil Personnel and salary increase 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 Dr. Testaverde to approve salary increases for non-union personnel - 12 month staff per the Superintendent's memo dated September 9, 2020 which was approved by the Salary Negotiations subcommittee. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. James to approve a 2.50% salary increase for the Director of Technology and Information Systems, a 2.25% salary increase for the HR Director/Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, a 2.50% increase for the Business Manager, a 2.25% salary increase for the Comptroller, a \$4,000 salary increase for the Plant Facilities Manager and 2.25% salary increase for the Director of Community Partnerships for the 2020-2021 school year 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 Mr. Fitzgerald to adjourn at 7:33 PM.  
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Respectfully submitted,  
*Lisa Rand*  
Recording Secretary