



## 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, January 10, 2024** at 115 Amesbury Line Rd., Haverhill, MA.

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

Members Remote:    Dave Irving, Johanna True

Members Absent:    Donna Holaday

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

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. Mr. Irving and Ms. True were present via ZOOM. 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.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for December 13, 2023 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the Treasurer's Report for December 2023 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

## OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business posted.

## STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Dawensky Gustave provided an update on sports and activities of the different clubs. The boys basketball team is currently 3-5 with wins against Greater Lawrence and Greater Lowell. The girls basketball team is currently 4-4, with a strong 2nd place showing in the Amesbury Holiday Tournament. The wrestling team currently has an 8-6-1 overall record. The team placed 2nd overall at the Pentucket Holiday Tournament out of 19 teams. The SkillsUSA Chapter is gearing up for the March 14th District Qualifying Contest/Competition. On January 10th, Representative Andy Vargas was at Whittier to promote voting. Students 16 and older will have an opportunity in February to pre-register or register to vote. GSA is planning their spring events, as well as preparing for the next GSA Leadership Council meeting. Last meeting, students created friendship bracelets and enjoyed socializing in a safe and supportive environment. At the multicultural club a senior club member gave a wonderful presentation about her journey from Pakistan to Whittier Tech. Members of the club attended the Bystander Intervention Training. The Interact Club sent holiday cards to Baker Katz and the Oxford House in Haverhill. They are participating in community meals service with the Haverhill Rotary club on Monday, January 29th at the Citizens Center in Haverhill. The chess club numbers have risen in the past weeks. Last Tuesday, 19 members showed up to prepare for a blitz tournament. Students will use timers to play five (5) minute blitz games to determine the Blitz Chess Champion. The Student Government is working on a speech to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. next week. They are working on plans for some fun class events in the spring. Many of the student government students participated in Mr. Warne's Bystander Training in December and found it worthwhile. The ski club will travel to Waterville Valley NH by coach bus on January 21st with 50 members. They had a very successful raffle in December which will help travel expenses. The Environmental Club has the tower garden at the Poet's Inn up and running. The students have been growing herbs in Room 3110 and have supplied the Poet's Inn with basil and parsley that have been used in recent events. The drama club is working on the spring musical, *Mean Girls*. The cast will be rehearsing 3-4 days a week until March. The art club students have been learning how to glaze pottery and properly load the ceramics. They have also been constructing masks for the upcoming *Mean Girls* play.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of instructors to work in the December vacation bootcamp and evening school program for spring 2024. She also reported on the resignations of a cafeteria worker, maintenance mechanic and moderate disabilities instructor.

### Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that the Executive Subcommittee met January 10th to discuss the FY25 budget. At that meeting, they began with a 6.06% increase which will be reduced for the next Executive Subcommittee meeting in February.

### MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that on February 6th and 7th, 21 sophomores will take the Biology MCAS retest. She stated that results for the juniors who had to take the math and English retest in November should be delivered by the end of January.

### School Building Update

Ms. Lynch reported that there is a vote on January 23, 2024 from 11-7. She encouraged everyone to check where their polling locations are. There is site walkthrough at Whittier Tech on Saturday from 9-11 so the public can see behind the walls and systems like plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and the wastewater treatment plant.

### Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. On Tuesday, January 2nd and January 9th, she attended the Whittier Building Project PR Coordination meetings. On Wednesday, January 3rd and January 10th, she attended the Whittier Tech weekly Executive project meetings. On Friday, January 5, 2024, she hosted an area superintendent meeting. Superintendents from Pentucket, Triton, Haverhill and Newburyport were in attendance. Ms. Lynch reported that Whittier has received an anonymous grant from a non-profit organization in the amount of \$390,000. These funds are designated to support the building trades, advanced manufacturing, engineering, marine technology and culinary equipment. Ms. Lynch thanked the anonymous donor for their generous support.

By motion of Mr. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Coppinger to accept the grant from a non-profit organization in the amount of \$390,000 with gratitude. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

## PRINCIPAL/ASST. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal/Asst. Superintendent, provided an update. He stated that winter sports continue to move forward with their seasons. All teams are in first, second or third place and are all very successful. There are over 200 student athletes competing in athletics. On the Amesbury/Whittier Hockey team, there are 12 students on varsity and 11 students on the JV hockey team. The December Whittier Boot Camp was successful. Twelve students made up attendance days, seven students received a waiver from a double F, and three students were able to pass PE. Also, during this camp the student success leaders were present each day and facilitated with the staff and students. Edgenuity courses were created in each class that Whittier offers so that students could actually work on topics that they struggled with during term 1. An edgenuity course was created for those students who only owed attendance days in the vocational technical strand of Employability. All students were provided with work to complete and earn their make up hours or waiver. Before the holiday break, the staff and the administration enjoyed some fun activities together. They had two Holiday Potluck Extravaganza's, which were held in the curriculum office. Some more fun activities are in the planning stages. Staff and students are preparing for Mid Term Assessments. Term 2 ends Friday, January 19th, Mid Term Assessments are January 16th-19th, and report cards will be issued for Term 2 on January 26th. On January 10th, Skills USA welcomed Representative Andy Vargas to Whittier Tech. He met with the Week 2/Academic juniors and seniors. He gave a presentation on "Voting" and also answered questions from students. He had already given the presentation to Week 1/Academic junior and seniors on December 13th. On Monday, January 15th, there will be No School/Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Whittier will celebrate Dr. King's life and legacy and the DEI coordinator is planning for Black History Month starting February 1st. Mr. Laganas stated they are working on planning the next ALICE drill.

## BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager, provided the Variance Analysis from July through December as required by the Annual Agenda. Quarterly transfers within major functional categories have been made to balance some of the accounts while other accounts will be balanced at year end. Ms. Kosmes reported that on December 12, 2023, bids were received from two (2) vendors for a five (5) year lease of six (6) school buses. New England Transit Sales, Inc. was the lowest responsive bidder with an annual lease payment of \$93,394. The term of the lease exceeds three (3) years and requires School Committee approval before the contract can be awarded.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the five (5) year bus lease for six (6) buses from New England Transit Sales, Inc. as presented.  
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. James reported that there were no annual agenda items for February. Mr. James reported that the 2024 Standard Mileage Rate from the IRS is 67 cents. Mr. James asked the Committee to vote on acceptance of the rate.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Murphy to accept the 2024 Standard Mileage Rate from the IRS of 67 cents. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

#### SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee met January 10, 2024. They will meet again at 5:30 pm on February 13, 2024.

The Instructional Subcommittee has not met.

The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee has not met. They will meet at 3:00 pm on January 30, 2024.

The Policy Subcommittee has not met. They will meet at 5:00 pm on February 13, 2024.

#### MEETING DATES

The Executive Subcommittee meeting is Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 5:30 pm.

The Regular School Committee meeting is Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 6:30 pm.

#### NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted. Mr. Murphy asked if there is a walk through on Saturday, January 13, 2024 from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Yes, there is one scheduled.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session posted.

By motion of Mr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Slevoski to adjourn at 6:52 P.M.  
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Respectfully submitted,  
*Lisa Rand*  
Recording Secretary