



WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held on **Wednesday, December 13, 2023** at 115 Amesbury Line Rd., Haverhill, MA.

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

Members Remote: None

Members Absent: None

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. James began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Lynch stated that the holiday float is in the back parking lot for members to view if they have not seen it. She reported that the float won first place and she thanked all the staff and students involved in creating the float.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. James asked if there was any public comment. Mr. James reminded the public that public comment is not a discussion, debate or dialogue between them and the School Committee. It is an opportunity for them to express an opinion on issues with School Committee authority. He stated they would be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present material and begin by stating their name and city/town. He stated that if anybody has written comments longer than three (3) minutes, to submit them to the Chair after the meeting for the record. There were 15 people that spoke during public comment. They all spoke in regards to the Whittier Tech Building project. There were six (6) people that spoke against the project and 9 (nine) that spoke in favor of the project.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Ms. Coppinger to suspend the rules and move the agenda item #4 School Building Committee Update section

a. Discussion and vote to conduct a district-wide election to approve debt of the district to pay costs of the new Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School, as permitted by G.L. c.71, section 14D and G.L. c.71, section 16(n) for discussion and vote at this time. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Ms. Lowell to approve that the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical School District (the "District") hereby appropriates the amount of four hundred forty-four million six-hundred thirteen thousand eight-hundred thirteen dollars (\$444,613,813) for the purpose of paying costs of designing, constructing, originally equipping and furnishing a new District high school and related athletic facilities, located at 115 Amesbury Line Road, Haverhill, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto (the "Project"), which school facility shall have an anticipated useful life as an educational facility for the instruction of school children of at least 50 years, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended at the direction of the School Building Committee. To meet this appropriation the District is authorized to borrow said amount, under and pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §16(n), G.L. c. 71, §14D and the District Agreement, as amended, or pursuant to any other enabling authority. The District acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need as determined by the MSBA, and any Project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District; provided further that any grant that the District may receive from the MSBA shall not exceed the lesser of (1) sixty-one and thirty-nine one hundredths percent (61.39%) of eligible, approved Project costs, as determined by the MSBA, and (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA, and that the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the District and the MSBA. The debt authorized by this vote of the Committee shall be submitted to the registered voters of the District's member communities for approval at a District-wide election to be held on January 23, 2024 in accordance with the provisions of G.L. c.71, §16(n), G.L. c.71, §14D and the District Agreement. There was discussion on this motion.

By motion of Ms. Holaday, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to amend the motion to change the date for the district-wide election to be held on April 2, 2024. Roll call vote - 12 (no) 2 (yes - Mr. Fitzgerald, Ms. Holaday) - motion failed

There was a vote on the original motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Ms. Lowell by roll call vote - 11 (yes) 3 (no - Mr. C. O'Connor, Mr. Fitzgerald & Ms. Holaday) - motion passed

The Chair called for a 5 minute recess at 7:46 P.M.

The Committee returned to open session at 7:52 P.M.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for November 6, 2023 as presented.
Unanimous

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Ms. Coppinger to approve the Treasurer's Report for November 2023 as presented. Unanimous

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 program has 16 players on the varsity roster and over 30 student athletes each on the JV and freshman teams. They started their season on December 8th against Greater Lawrence. The girls basketball team has had a great pre-season, with a lot of girls signing up to play. The wrestling team anticipates a competitive season with over 50 students trying out. Their season kicks off on Saturday. SkillsUSA had a successful overnight trip to Marlborough for the Fall State Leadership conference where 11 students participated in leadership activities. SkillsUSA students are collaborating with the history department to promote early voting sign-ups on Dec 13th and Dec 20th. The United Nations club continues to meet on Tuesdays after school, debating topics such as President Biden's aid package and members are preparing for outside competitions in the spring. The Multicultural club attended the Coats for Kids drive that runs until Jan. 7th, and a member shared her story about coming from Puerto Rico. The club attended a Bystander Intervention presentation on Dec. 8th. The Key Club has regular meetings involving community service, such as distributing 210 Thanksgiving greeting cards and working on 250 cards for the Holiday Season. The Interact club served community meals on Nov 27th and is working on holiday cards for Haverhill area nursing homes. The Chess club is starting its Winter Blitz Tournament,

featuring a series of five-minute games. Student government honored veterans in November and collaborated on Bystander Intervention training. Plans are underway for Martin Luther King Day, and a student-faculty basketball game is being considered for late winter or early spring. The Ski club raffle sales for Pats Peak lift tickets are ongoing, and the club is preparing for a Waterville Valley trip in January. Environmental club students are working on posters for the soft plastic/ecobrick drive and setting up a tower garden for Poet's Inn. The Drama club held auditions for the school musical, *Mean Girls*, with callbacks this week. Set construction has begun in the carpentry shop. Art club students are engaged in various projects, including ceramics, canvas painting, and creating comics in sketchbooks. Senior portraits are complete for the Yearbook club, and page layout for sports and shops sections will begin in January. The yearbook is ahead of schedule, thanks to dedicated seniors. Poetry meetings are held every other Thursday, focusing on winter and holiday poetry. Members explore different styles and forms of poetry.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of a 7D van driver, route bus driver, cafeteria worker, winter coaches for 2023-2024, MA CTE performance site administrators, above the influence program manager, above the influence advisors, evening school instructor, event ticket collector and medical tutors. She also reported on the resignations of a route bus driver, culinary arts instructor, electrical instructor, CAD/Drafting instructor and transportation coordinator.

Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that they will be meeting with Department Heads and the Administration to finalize department submissions to build the FY25 budget.

MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that there was no MCAS update.

School Building Update

Ms. Lynch reported that the School Committee voted on December 13, 2023 to approve the Schematic Design for the school building project.

Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. On Wednesday, November 8th, November 15th, November 29th, December 6th and December 13th, she attended the Whittier Tech weekly Executive project meetings. On Thursday, November 9, 2023, she attended the Haverhill Rotary Veteran's breakfast along with Amanda Crosby one of Whittier's vocational coordinators, Nancy Calverley, Whittier's Rotary Interact Advisor and several students. On Monday, November 13, 2023, she attended the West Newbury Select Board meeting along with Kara Kosmes, Bob Hardy and several other administrators and teachers. On Tuesday, November 14, 2023, she attended the Newbury Select Board meeting along with Johanna True, Kara Kosmes, Bob Hardy, and several other administrators and teachers. On Wednesday, November 15, 2023, she attended the YMCA Educator of the Year award ceremony. She reported that they honored Max Beauregard, Lisa Desberg, Melissa Cook, Bill Yameen, and Teri Bragg. On Thursday, November 16, 2023, Whittier held their annual Parent's Night along with a community forum for the building project. Ms. Lynch thanked everyone who was in attendance. On Friday, November 17, 2023, she attended a Legislative Delegation meeting at Whittier along with the OPM, Leftfield, and architects JCJ. On Monday, November 20, 2023, she attended the Groveland Select Board meeting along with Lisa O'Connor, Kara Kosmes and several other administrators and teachers. On Tuesday, November 28, 2023, she attended the Amesbury City Council meeting along with committee members Patricia Lowell, and Sandi Coppinger. Also in attendance were Kara Kosmes, Bob Hardy and several other administrators and teachers. On Thursday, November 30, 2023, she attended the Merrimac Senior Center with Tia Gerber to provide them with a quick update on the building project. On Monday, December 4, 2023, she met with the Chief of Police in Haverhill along with Chris Laganas. On Tuesday, December 5, 2023, Whittier held a community forum on the building project at the public library in Salisbury along with Committee member Ron Fitzgerald, Kara Kosmes, Bob Hardy and several other administrators and teachers. On Wednesday, December 6, 2023, Whittier held a community forum at the Merrimac Town Hall on the building project. Ms. Lynch thanked Kara Kosmes, Bob Hardy, committee member Mike Rossi and several other administrators and teachers for attending. On Monday, December 11, 2023, she attended the Newburyport City Council meeting along with Kara Kosmes, Bob Hardy, and several other members of the administrative team and many teachers. On Tuesday, December 12, 2023, she attended the Haverhill City Council meeting along with Kara Kosmes, Bob Hardy, members of the administrative team and many teachers.

PRINCIPAL/ASST. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal/Asst. Superintendent, provided an update. He reported that Whittier fall sports are complete. Mr. Laganas congratulated the students, coaches, parents/guardians and the booster club for another successful fall sports season. He also congratulated Kevin Bradley who received the 2023 CAC Conference Coach of The Year award. On Thursday, December 7th, Kevin Bradley and the boosters held a successful sports banquet. There were over 300 parents and student athletes who attended the banquet. The winter sports season began November 27th. There are 211 student athletes participating in winter sports. There are also approximately 20 hockey players playing for the Amesbury/Whittier team. Parents Night was well attended on November 16th. There was a strong turnout, especially by the parents of freshmen students. Mr. Laganas reported that 80 seniors received the John & Abigail Adams Scholarship. These students will receive a credit toward tuition for up to eight semesters of undergraduate education at a state college or university in Massachusetts should they decide to attend. Mr. Laganas stated that the 8th grade tours are ongoing and are set to conclude December 14th. The tours provide an excellent opportunity for potential students to explore Whittier. On December 12th, Hill View Montessori will be touring and on December 14th, Pentucket. The Holiday Fund makes a significant impact each year for Whittier students and families by easing the challenges they face. Mr. Laganas thanked all who have contributed to the fund so far as well as Kara Kosmes, Cheryl Begin, the Guidance Department and Elaine Kevgas for coordinating the process. Mr. Laganas stated that donations can be made at <https://foundation.whittiertech.org/>. He reported that term 2 progress reports will be issued Friday, December 15th.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager reported that Whittier is fortunate and grateful to be the recipient of donations from generous individuals and businesses. In accordance with school committee policy and as outlined in a memo included in the school committee packets to members dated December 5, 2023, she requested acceptance of the 13 donations totaling \$94,315.92.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Irving to accept the 13 donations with gratitude in the amount of \$94,315.92 listed in the memorandum from the Business Manager dated December 5, 2023, as presented. Unanimous

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. James reported that there were no annual agenda items for January.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee has not met. They will meet at 5:30 pm on January 10, 2024.

The Instructional Subcommittee met on November 1, 2023.

By motion of Ms. Lowell, seconded by Ms. Coppinger to approve the minutes of November 1, 2023 as presented. Approved - 1 Abstained (L. O'Connor)

The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee has not met. They will meet soon.

The Policy Subcommittee has not met. They will meet in January.

The following policies were presented for a second & final reading: CL-Administrative Reports; GA-Personnel Policy Objectives; GCQC- Resignation of Professional Staff; GDQD- Suspension and Dismissal of Support Staff Members; JKA- Student Discipline/Special Needs Students; KCB- Community Involvement; GBA- Equal Employment Opportunity; GBEA- Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest; GBEB- Staff Conduct; GBEB- Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff; GBEBD- Online Fundraising and Solicitations-Crowdfunding; GBEC- Drug-Free Workplace Policy; GBGB- Staff Personal Security and Safety; GBGE- Domestic Leave Policy; GBGF-Family & Medical Leave; GBI- Staff Participation in Political Activities; GBJ- Personnel Records; GCA-Professional Staff Positions; GCBA- Professional Staff Salary Schedules; GCBB- Employment of Principals; GCE-Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies; GCF-Professional Staff Hiring; GCG-Substitute Professional Staff Employment; GCIA-Philosophy of Staff Development; GCJ-Professional Teacher Status; HA-Negotiations Goals; HB-Negotiations Legal Status; and HF-School Committee Negotiating Agents; Cash Reserves and Debt Management

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms. L. O'Connor to approve CL-Administrative Reports;GA-Personnel Policy Objectives; GCQC- Resignation of Professional Staff; GDQD- Suspension and Dismissal of Support Staff Members; JKA- Student Discipline/Special Needs Students; KCB- Community Involvement; GBA- Equal Employment Opportunity; GBEA- Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest; GBEB- Staff Conduct; GBEB- Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff; GBEBD- Online Fundraising and Solicitations-Crowdfunding; GBEC- Drug-Free Workplace Policy; GBGB-Staff Personal Security and Safety; GBGE- Domestic Leave Policy; GBGF-Family & Medical Leave; GBI- Staff Participation in Political Activities; GBJ- Personnel Records; GCA-Professional Staff Positions; GCBA- Professional Staff Salary Schedules; GCBB- Employment of Principals; GCE-Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies; GCF-Professional Staff Hiring; GCG-Substitute Professional Staff Employment;

GCIA-Philosophy of Staff Development; GCJ-Professional Teacher Status; HA-Negotiations Goals; HB-Negotiations Legal Status; and HF-School Committee Negotiating Agents; Cash Reserves and Debt Management for a second and final reading as presented. Unanimous

MEETING DATES

The Executive Subcommittee meeting is Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 5:30 pm.

The Regular School Committee meeting is Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 6:30 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 8:12 P.M.

Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Rand

Recording Secretary