

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of November 14, 2018

Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School
600 Franklin Street, Whitman MA

Meeting convened: 7:04 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 9:02 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Frederick Small, Robert O'Brien, Jr., Michael Jones, Daniel Cullity, Christopher Howard, Christopher Scriven and Alexandria Taylor

Members absent: Steve Bois and Robert Trotta

Administrators present: Jeffrey Szymaniak, Superintendent of Schools
George M. Ferro, Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Chair Hayes brought the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and announced the meeting was being recorded and broadcast live. Chair Hayes reported on upcoming events and will continue announcements at all future School Committee meetings.

Dates to Remember:

- November 12, 2018 – No School – Veteran’s Day Observed – Central Offices Closed
- November 14, 2018 – Facilities and Capital Projects Subcommittee meeting – 6:00 PM – HS Library
- November 14, 2018 – School Committee meeting – 7:00 PM – HS Library
- November 21-23, 2018 – No School – Thanksgiving Recess – Central Offices Closed
- December 7, 2018 – Early Release – PK-12 – Professional Development Day

In addition, the Hanson PTO is holding a fundraiser on January 27, 2019 at Cranberry Cove, Camp Kiwanee in Hanson. This is a polar plunge event and participants must be age 18 and over to raise money through sponsorships to support the Indian Head Elementary School. Several School Committee members and District administrators committed to participating. Parent and PTO member, Melissa Valachovic, spoke on behalf of the PTO about the event, adding it is open to the Whitman-Hanson community and volunteers will also be needed. Chair Hayes announced the annual Thanksgiving Day football game between Whitman-Hanson and Abington will begin at 10:00 a.m. on November 22. Please contact Athletic Director, Bob Rodgers, to place advertisements/shout-out messages on the scoreboard.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting Minutes of October 10, 2018

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of October 10, 2018, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Student Advisory Report

Marah Burt, Student Council School Committee Representative, reported on student activities across the District. Miss Burt’s highlights included the successful Drama Club play “Footloose”, the upcoming Band and Choir fundraiser mattress sale on November 17 at the High School, and the Harlem Wizards basketball team game versus Conley School “Crushers” on November 19 at the High School. Ticket will be sold in an effort to raise funds for the Conley Elementary School. Other news included upcoming parent-teacher conference dates and 8th grade orientation on November 29 at the high school.

Chair Hayes took the meeting out of order to accommodate selected agenda items.

Old Business

Hanson Town Administrator, Mike McCue updated the Committee on the proposed cell tower installation at the Hanson Middle School. The purpose of installing a cell tower at a selected location in Hanson is to address safety and communication throughout the community. In March of 2018, during two very powerful storms, landlines were down, power was lost, and cellular calls were either dropped or without reception. Communication was in issue in major sections of the town. Mr. McCue referred to a change in by laws made by the Town to allow a cell tower development on town property. The Hanson Middle School was identified as a prime location. Mr. McCue reported the Town of Hanson received three very competitive bids for the project in response to RFP's (Request for Proposals) in May to lease space for a wireless communication facility (cell tower). Mr. McCue reported a contract has been awarded for the project and provided an outline of the lead time, cost, and potential for related revenue. A vicinity map outlining the placement of the monopole tower on the property was provided. The pole is a preferred design and in such a way to host multiple carriers, and fire and police departments. The proposed site installation is at the northeast corner of the property; however, needs to go through a variance approval process.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; to support the Town of Hanson project for the installation of a cell tower on the Hanson Middle School property, pending the Town of Hanson approval process, as presented. The motion carried 7-1-0. Mr. Scriven opposed.

Superintendent's Report

Personnel update – Food Services director

Mr. Szymaniak introduced Nadine Doucette, who has been appointed to the Food Services Director position and will be replacing Maureen MacKenzie. Mrs. Doucette discussed her past experience in food services and excitement to bring ideas in nutrition and wellness to Whitman-Hanson.

MASC/MASS – Joint Conference Update

Mr. Szymaniak reported he attended the MASC/MASS Joint Conference with Assistant Superintendent, George Ferro. They attended a number of informative panel sessions and spoke numerous vendors regarding integrated software products that help the school districts work more efficiently. Mr. Small also attended the Conference and reported on finance and regional transportation panel sessions he attended. He alluded to the rising cost of transportation and that consideration is made to explore every avenue to reduce costs, including developing a district transportation fleet.

Draft of Safety Presentation

Mr. Szymaniak presented a draft document on safety and security for elementary level students. It is anticipated the presentation will be finalized in December and presented to students in January. The goal is to inform parents and students and deliver common language and terminology (stay put, lockdown, etc.) to provide awareness and reduce anxiety when situations occur.

FY2018 Certified E&D

Christine Suckow reported the state Department of Revenue (DOR) released the Excess and Deficiency (E&D) certification for Whitman-Hanson Regional School District via email to School Committee members on September 26, 2018. "Based upon the unaudited balance sheet submitted, the amount of excess and deficiency or "E & D" as of July 1, 2018 for Whitman Hanson is General Fund \$961,237.00. This certification is in accordance with the provisions of G. L. Chapter 71, §16B½, as amended. The unencumbered funds certified above in excess of five percent of the operating budget and budgeted capital costs for the succeeding fiscal year must be applied to reduce the current fiscal year's assessment. For your district, this excess amount equals \$0.00." Mrs. Suckow provided a schedule of changes in E&D for Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2018.

Budget FY2019 Update

Christine Suckow presented the year to date encumbrances and revenue. Mrs. Suckow noted the Maquan

School is no longer being reported. Also of note, the encumbrances report itemizations listed on page 9 for Special Education, Transportation, Out-of-District and McKinney-Vento are already over budget. Mrs. Suckow anticipates receiving state reimbursement to help cover costs without utilizing funds in the current budget. Mr. Szymaniak added the District is reviewing current programs and consider options to decrease the volume of students placed in out-of-district programs.

Vendor Contract Extensions

Christine Suckow recommended contract renewals for bus transportation with First Student, custodial services with S.J. Services and the SmartCentre copy center with Collegiate Press as follows:

1. First Student Transportation: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021

				CONTRACT
YEAR	% INCREASE	AMOUNT		TOTAL
2020	3.5%	\$ 60,128.00		\$ 1,668,881.00
2021	2.5%	\$ 41,630.00		\$ 1,708,490.00

2. SJ Services – Custodial Contract: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021

				CONTRACT
YEAR	% INCREASE	AMOUNT		TOTAL
2020	3.0%	\$ 29,000.00		\$ 1,188,884.00
2021	2.0%	\$ 29,000.00		\$ 1,217,884.00

3. Collegiate Press- Copy Center: July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2022

				CONTRACT
YEAR	% INCREASE	AMOUNT		TOTAL
2020	0.0%	\$0.00		\$ 342,725.00
2021	0.0%	\$0.00		\$ 342,725.00
2022	0.0%	\$0.00		\$ 342,725.00

First Student Contract Extension

A two-year contract extension with a 3.5% cost increase in the first year and 2.5% in the second year, was presented. A motion to approve the contract extension for First Student as presented was made and withdrawn by Mr. Howard and Mr. O'Brien after the Committee expressed concern that the contract renewal extension was at a significant increase. The Committee considered options related to transporting students, including a self-owned fleet, and requested an exploratory analysis of expenses. Mrs. Suckow will provide a cost analysis to Mr. Small. The Committee also requested the Director of Business Services re-visit the contract extension costs with First Student to consider a reduced extension rate. Mr. Small requested a copy of the full First Student contracts is shared with the Committee.

VOTE: Mr. Scriven motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to table the contract extension for First Student bus transportation until after the Director of Business Services re-visits with the vendor to consider reducing the contract extension proposal. The motioned passed unanimously.

Collegiate Press Contract Extension

A three-year contract extension with no increases annually was presented.

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to extend the contract with Collegiate Press for the SmartCentre copy center through June 30, 2022, as presented.

S.J. Services Contract Extension

A two-year contract renewal of 3.0% in the first year and 2.0% in the second year, was presented.

A motion to approve the contract extension for S.J. Services was made and withdrawn by Mr. Small and Mr. Cullity after the Committee expressed concern with the increases in the proposed two-year contract extension. Mr. Howard suggested the same strategy of re-visiting renewal costs be applied to the custodial services with S.J. Services. The Committee conferred that vendors need to appreciate the district's budget deficit and challenges in funding. Mr. Small inquired about the increases on the state bid list and to apply that theory to the district vendor increases. Mrs. Suckow will work to determine those increases.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Ms. Cullity seconded; voted to table the contract renewal for S. J. Services after the Director of Business Services re-visits with the vendor to consider reducing the contract extension proposal. The motioned passed unanimously.

Math Pilot Update

Mr. Szymaniak reported Curriculum Director, Brian Selig, is leading the implementation of two math program pilots at the elementary level. Mr. Ferro added the current EnVision Math program is ending and EnVision 2.0 has received negative reviews. Mr. Ferro provided a brief overview of the new pilot programs, Bridges and i-Ready. Once the pilots are completed, a decision will be made on the preferred math program. The District will consider lease options with professional development included. The implementation is anticipated to occur over the summer of 2019.

MCAS Report

Mr. Ferro reported on MCAS results and standards. As the Committee is aware, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has changed the assessment platform and the accountability system for students, teacher, schools and districts.

The following points were noted:

- All assessments will be computer-based going forward
- Previous MCAS scores are not in alignment with new Next Gen MCAS scores
- The assessments value readiness and consistency across the grade levels
- The state rates the school district is rated on a variety of items and reviews data from all perspectives:
 - Student Achievement
 - Growth Percentage
 - High School Grade Rate
 - Efficiency
 - Chronic absenteeism
 - Advanced Coursework
- WHRSD is included in the 90% not requiring assistance or intervention
- WHRSD is included in 53% of schools in partially meeting every single target.
- WHRSD is in the middle of the fifteen years of MCAS results data
- Of note, WHRSD Grade 10 is aligned closest across the state in ELA, Math and Science. In Grade 8, most students fall in the median, and conversely, less failure than the state average

Mr. Ferro discussed the tools needed to reach beyond average or median statistics, and to focus on learning and teaching the standards and provide students with a playbook and support staff in all teaching levels. This also includes supporting student emotional and social needs. Mr. Ferro also stated a district may lose points for not building course sections correctly.

High School Athletic Entrance

Mr. Szymaniak reported he briefed the Facilities Subcommittee on construction at the athletic entrance at the high school at the Subcommittee meeting earlier that evening. Adjustments are being made for safety and security to the Athletics entrance. The entrance will become narrower to direct people better. That area will also serve as a security check point, reducing the unnecessary traffic through the Main Office entrance. A flat screen, interactive monitor is also being installed.

New Business

High School Loop Initiative

High School Principal, Dr. Christopher Jones, presented a fundraiser idea on behalf of Panther Education Trust (PET). Typically, their most profitable fundraiser is the Annual Truck or Treat each November. However, due to inclement weather this fall, the fundraiser was not held. Dr. Jones reported PET funds are considerably low at this time. A raffle fundraiser to name the traffic loop in front of the high school was proposed. The idea came about after painting the school spirit rock in the front of the school. Annually, the raffle winner will name the loop and a temporary sign would be installed with the winner's choice of a person's name, family name, or community person's name. To kick off the fundraiser, Dr. Jones suggested naming the loop Panther Education Trust Circle.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Howard seconded; voted to approve an Annual Panther Education Trust fundraiser to temporarily name the traffic loop in front of the high school, as presented. The High School Principal and Superintendent will approve the name, and the first naming will be "Panther Education Trust Circle." The motion passed unanimously.

Equipment Proposal

Chair Hayes introduced a discussion of purchasing a front end loader versus the current lease option. Christine Suckow reported she obtained figures from the state bid list. A quote from Milton CAT Quote for Compact Wheel Loader dated 10/22/2018 was distributed. The purchase cost would be approximately \$92,900. Leasing costs may run \$21,735 annually with a purchase option after five years. Mrs. Suckow confirmed the District currently has funds encumbered to lease equipment, which also includes insurance. The Committee discussed the life expectancy of the equipment as well as anticipated maintenance and insurance costs. Chair Hayes suggested contacting Milton CAT for maintenance contract costs when reviewing purchase options.

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to table the equipment proposal for a front end loader purchase until additional information on insurance costs and maintenance schedules and costs can be determined. The motion passed unanimously.

Job Description Revision – Food Services Director

Mr. Ferro reported the current Food Services Director Job Description required updates to include new position requirements (education degree) and other minor revisions.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to waive the first reading of the revised Food Services Director Job Description. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; vote to approve the revised Food Services Director Job Description, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Acceptance of Gifts

Interim Director of Student Services, Lauren Mathisen, submitted a written request seeking approval of a \$5,000.00 donation given to the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District by Chrissi Steele on behalf of Cecile Higginson Murphy Foundation. In the memo, Mrs. Mathisen proposed using the funds towards sensory equipment and augmentative curriculum.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; vote to accept the donation of \$5,000 towards sensory equipment and augmentative curriculum, as presented. The motion passes unanimously.

Surplus Request

ELA Curriculum Director, Amy Floeck, submitted a written request to declare 68 MCAS English Language Arts Grade 7 books as surplus, due to the recent changes and the adoption of Next Generation MCAS, the materials are outdated.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Jones seconded; voted to declare MCAS English Language Arts Grade 7 books as surplus. The motion carried unanimously.

Field Trips

The Ski and Snowboard Club proposed to amend the previously approved field trip request for January 12, 2019 from Gunstock to Cannon Mountain Ski Resort in New Hampshire due to cost savings.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to waive the nurse requirement and approve the out-of-state Ski and Snowboard Club field trip to Cannon Mountain Resort in Franconia, NH on January 12, 2019, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Maquan School Update

Mr. Szymaniak reported he contacted the Town of Hanson Town Administrator, Michael McCue, to request use of the closed Maquan School for storage. The District requested use of the cafeteria and gymnasium for storage of student desks, office furniture, and file cabinets for use at a later date. In addition, the Facilities Department is coordinating the winterization of the building and will conduct a hazardous material survey. The Facilities Department will also provide grounds maintenance and snow removal for one year.

Subcommittee Reports

Warrant Subcommittee

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; vote to accept the Warrant Subcommittee minutes of October 25, 2018 and November 8, 2018, as presented. The motion passed 7-0-1. Mr. Small abstained.

The Committee briefly discussed the current method of signing warrants. Warrant # 111418FS in the amount of \$48,879.59 was presented and signed.

Policy Subcommittee

There was nothing new to report.

Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Small reported the Facilities Subcommittee met earlier in the evening prior to the School committee meeting. In addition to items covered during the School Committee meeting, the capital matrices were reviewed.

Legislative Updates

Mr. Small reported Alyson Sullivan won the election for State Representative for the Town of Whitman. Josh Cutler remains the State Representative for the Town of Hanson. Mr. Small requested the Committee approve continued discussions for support to introduce tuition-free full day kindergarten in the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District by FY2021 with the legislators. Chair Hayes recommended inviting legislators to the February 2019 Budget Presentation meeting to discuss earmarking funds to start-up tuition-free full day kindergarten in the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District.

Pilgrim Area Collaborative

Mr. Bois was not present to report.

Negotiations Subcommittee

The next Negotiations Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2018.

Meeting Adjournment

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michelle Lindberg

Signature of School Committee Secretary

Meeting Handouts:

- Meeting Agenda for November 14, 2018
- Meeting Minutes of October 10, 2018
- Memo from Business Services Director – Certified E & D
- Memo from Business Services Director – vendor contract extensions
- Revised job description – Director of Food Services
- Memo from Student Services Director – Donation of \$5,000 for Special Education Department – ASD Classroom at HMS
- Memo from ELA Curriculum Director – Surplus request outdated MCAS materials
- Field Trip Request – Ski & Snowboard club venue change January 12, 2019 to Cannon Ski Area, Franconia, NH
- Warrant Subcommittee minutes of 10/25/2018
- Letter from Superintendent of Schools to the Hanson Town Administrator regarding Maquan School
- YTD Revenue and Expenditures Reports
- First Student Contract Award and Price Schedule executed 02/10/2016
- S.J. Services side letters – Closing of Maquan School and Supervisor/WHHS Security Position
- Milton CAT Quote for Compact Wheel Loader dated 10/22/2018
- Warrant Subcommittee minutes of 11/8/2018
- Vicinity map for cell tower location at Hanson Middle School