

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Minutes of July 22, 2019  
Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School  
600 Franklin Street, Whitman MA

Meeting convened: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 8:08 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Christopher Scriven, Frederick Small, Daniel Cullity, Christopher Howard, Michael Jones, Steve Bois, and Dawn Byers

Members absent: Robert O'Brien, Jr. and Alexandria Taylor

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

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Chair Hayes brought the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and announced the meeting was being recorded and broadcast live.

Superintendent's Report

*School Physician Appointment 2019-2020 SY*

**VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to re-appoint Dr. David Belcher as the school physician for the 2019-2020 school year. The motion passed unanimously.**

*South Shore Education Collaborative Membership Proposal*

Mr. Szymaniak reported that after researching opportunities for additional resources and savings, the District would benefit from membership with the South Shore Education Collaborative. Currently the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District pays a non-member tuition fee for enrolled students. The School Committee must vote to approve as part of the application process. The membership would become effective after one school year, in the 2020-2021 school year.

**VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to apply for membership with the South Shore Education Collaborative to become effective in the 2020-2021 school year. The motion passed unanimously.**

*Chair Hayes announced Important Dates to Remember:*

- Monday-Thursday, August 19-22, 2019 – New Teacher Orientation
- Monday, August 26, 2019 – All teachers and instructional aides Report for Professional Development
- Wednesday, August 28, 2019 – All Students PK-12 Return
- Wednesday, August 28, 2019 – School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM – HS Library
- Monday, September 2, 2019 – No School – Labor Day Observed

*Chair Hayes noted the letters included in the School Committee Packet.*

- Copy of letter from Representative Josh Cutler to the Joint Committee on Education regarding Chapter 70 minimum aid increment
- Copy of letter from State Representative Alyson Sullivan to Ways and Means Committee requesting increase in Regional Transportation Reimbursement to \$75,856,506 as adopted by the Senate during budget deliberations

Mr. Szymaniak reported the school district received notification from Governor Baker's Office that the school district has been awarded the Safer Schools and Communities "Local Equipment and Technology" grant in the amount of \$60,000 which will be used to fund the installation of door thumb locks in the schools. A copy of the award letter from Governor Baker's office was presented to the Committee.

### *Budget Discussion*

#### *FY2020 Updates*

Mr. Szymaniak reported Indian Head principal, Jill Cotreau, has resigned to accept a position elsewhere. The Superintendent plans to bring in an interim principal and is seeking a retiree, which will save on annual salary. A grade 5 elementary teacher position was added due to class size. This addition had no impact on the budget.

Mr. Szymaniak noted eighteen positions were cut from the FY2020 budget. As a result of the technology director position elimination and restructure of the Technology Department, various essentials that will impact the future were identified. The district-wide telephone system is antiquated and the two-way radios are outdated. Mr. Ferro reported that MassDOT will be widening the road and setting new poles along Routes 18 and 27 in Whitman in August. The construction affects twelve poles carrying private fiber optics for Whitman-Hanson. Mr. Ferro explained what is necessary to move and re-wire the fiber optics to the new poles and the financial impact.

Mr. Szymaniak is planning a full internal audit of the Technology Department. He will be reviewing the technology plan and studying all current systems and their sustainability and efficiency, including cyber security. Mr. Ferro noted with the restructure, the department is moving to a collaborative operations department, with facilities, transportation, and technology. The Superintendent confirmed the audit will insure utilization to the extent of the current platforms and technologies in place. Administration will consider audits of all departments once the Technology audit is complete.

Mr. Szymaniak discussed building use, the elimination of the coordinator and how the responsibilities have been re-organized in an effort to save money. There will be a review of the fee structure and other changes which may be brought to the Committee in the fall. The Superintendent plans to have building use and events become more competitive and is considering soliciting Bridgewater State University and Massasoit Community College to run adult college programs at Whitman-Hanson.

#### *Budget FY2021*

Mr. Szymaniak discussed the challenges of developing a FY2021 budget. The Governor's budget is still not signed to date, although Whitman-Hanson closed its' books on Friday, July 19, 2019. The Superintendent provided rough estimates for services for the FY2021 budget. They included increases of \$29,000 in custodial services and First Student bus transportation at \$41,600. The cost to start up tuition-free full day kindergarten is approximately \$710,000. It is anticipated utilities will increase \$83,000. Mr. Szymaniak noted the adjustment of a \$330,000 water and sewer bill from the town of Whitman. This invoice and demand for payment has been sent to legal counsel. The invoice is for water/sewer service for the last fifteen years which the town of Whitman states was inaccurately recorded and billed for the high school. Due to the erroneous billing in Whitman, it is problematic projecting future water/sewer bills. Other increases mentioned were \$1.1 million in salaries and \$100,000 in new ELA curriculum.

The total budget projection increase is estimated to be \$2.5 million. Again, Mr. Szymaniak noted the projections are a rough projection. Mr. Szymaniak reported the cost to implement tuition-free full-day kindergarten and adjust school start times alone is \$1,349,000. It is anticipated the special education line will remain at level service. The Superintendent discussed the current challenges to budget is staffing and hiring has not been completed for the upcoming school year. In addition, grants have not yet been written and processed.

Mr. Szymaniak reported he was sworn in to participate as a committee member of the Town of Whitman Budget Override Review Committee. The next meeting is August 12, 2019. The Superintendent will provide updates of Whitman Override Committee meetings at all School Committee meetings. Mr. Szymaniak reported the Town of Whitman has requested the school district FY2021 budget plan and is meeting to determine if a town-wide override would be effective. Mr. Szymaniak reported the initial Whitman Override Committee meeting involved organizing the group and appointed Chair, Vice Chair, etc. Mrs. Byers added the Override Committee discussed budget menu options versus a tiered budget. Mr. Szymaniak stated overall the meeting was positive.

Mrs. Byers considered reasons residents in Whitman enroll in other districts under school choice or private schools, citing academics, athletics, and related arts offered elsewhere. She noted that Whitman-Hanson does not have librarians or technology teachers at every school, there is no longer foreign language at the middle school level, and no band director. Mr. Szymaniak added that if Whitman-Hanson truly wants an inclusive education for all students, we need to do better. Our business is the student. Declining enrollment was discussed. The Superintendent will work to identify current trends in enrollment throughout the state and comps with Whitman and Hanson.

The Committee discussed level service and the priorities for the budget, as well as developing a five-year plan. The Superintendent will prepare a budget scenario for FY2021 that accommodates effective student learning and School Committee requests to restore lost programs and include full day kindergarten.

The Superintendent will notify the Town of Hanson regarding Whitman Override Committee purpose and WHRSD involvement.

The Chair requested all members submit their Superintendent evaluation no later than August 10. Mr. Szymaniak reported he participated in a panel discussion of superintendent's evaluations and will share the new rubric for superintendent's evaluations once available after August 15.

#### *Warrant Subcommittee*

Warrants signed at the meeting will close out Warrant Subcommittee posting dated June 20, 2019.

#### *Meeting Adjournment*

**VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded: voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michelle Lindberg

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*Signature of School Committee Secretary*

#### Meeting Handouts:

- Meeting agenda for July 22, 2019
- Notification from Governor Baker's Office awarded Safer Schools and Communities "Local Equipment and Technology" grant
- Copy of letter from Representative Josh Cutler to the Joint Committee on Education regarding Chapter 70 minimum aid increment
- Copy of letter from State Representative Alyson Sullivan to Ways and Means Committee requesting increase in Regional Transportation Reimbursement to \$75,856,506 as adopted by the Senate during budget deliberations