

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of April 10, 2019
Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School
600 Franklin Street, Whitman MA

Meeting convened: 6:15 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 9:36 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Robert Trotta, Frederick Small, Robert O'Brien, Jr., Daniel Cullity, Steve Bois, Christopher Scriven, Christopher Howard, and Michael Jones (left at 8:48 p.m.)

Members absent: Alexandria Taylor

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

Chair Hayes brought the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. and asked for a motion to go into Executive Session.

Executive Session (High School Room 201) 6:15 p.m.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded: voted to go into Executive Session at 6:15 p.m. to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; WHEA Bargaining Units.

Roll Call

Mr. Hayes - Yes

Mr. Trotta - Yes

Mr. Small - Yes

Mr. O'Brien - Yes

Mr. Cullity - Yes

Mr. Howard - Yes

Mr. Bois - Yes

Mr. Jones - Yes

Mr. Scriven - Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded: voted to come out of Executive Session at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Mr. Hayes - Yes

Mr. Trotta - Yes

Mr. Small - Yes

Mr. O'Brien - Yes

Mr. Cullity - Yes

Mr. Howard - Yes

Mr. Bois - Yes

Mr. Jones - Yes

Mr. Scriven - Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Open Session (High School Library) 7:04 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of the School Committee meeting of March 11, 2019 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of the School Committee meeting of March 13, 2019 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of the School Committee and Whitman Finance Committee joint meeting of March 27, 2019 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of the School Committee and Hanson Finance Committee joint meeting of April 2, 2019 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Student Advisory Report

Marah Burt, Student Council School Committee Representative, reported on student activities. April 11 is an early release for parent conferences. On April 12, Habitat for Humanity is sponsoring a free movie event to see Dr. Seuss' "The Lorax" movie in the Performing Arts Center at 6:30 p.m. On April 27, there are two events going on at the same time. The 4th annual Whitman-Hanson Best Buddies Road Race at 10:00 a.m. at the high school and the National Honor Society's Day of Service, rain or shine. There are six different locations where community members may volunteer. The Duval School Fun Day T-shirt design contest is on April 26.

Superintendent's Report

North River Collaborative Report

Amendment to Collaborative Agreement to add Holbrook Public Schools

The Superintendent reported as a part of the amendment process, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) must review the draft amended agreement to ensure that it complies with M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E, 603 CMR 50.00, and all Department issued guidance. As a result of that review, changes are necessary to the original amended agreement to be in compliance.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to approve the amended changes to the North River Collaborative Agreement as presented and proposed in consultation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The motion passed unanimously.

Conley Elementary School Waiver Discussion

The Superintendent presented information regarding Conley School closing on March 15, 2019. After multiple cases of students suffering from a stomach condition were reported and in consultation with the lead nurse, school nurse and school department officials, the school was closed on Friday, March 15, 2019 to prevent further spread of the virus and for a deep cleaning over the weekend. Mr. Ferro reported after further investigation and policy review, it was determined the full day will need to be made up at face value by reading Guideline (1). <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=6682>. Based on student learning time regulations, the day will need to be made up. In review of DESE regulation 603 CMR 27.00 provisions under 27.07 Waivers, number (2), it provides an option for School Committee to provide a written request to the office of the commissioner asking him to grant a waiver under "emergency or extraordinary circumstance." Students must attend 180 days but may be eligible for a waiver of the minimum.

VOTE: Mr. Bois motioned; Mr. Howard seconded; voted to apply for a waiver of the minimum school year requirement set forth in 603 CMR 27.03(3) for the Conley Elementary School in Whitman, in situations where an emergency or extraordinary circumstance forces the closing of one or more of the district's schools. The motion passed unanimously.

Amended Regional Agreement Update

Chair Hayes reported the Regional Agreement Amendment is on the Town of Whitman Annual May Town Meeting Warrant for a vote of the citizens.

Unit B Memorandum of Understanding

Superintendent informed the Committee of a typographical error on the Unit B MOA. In preparations of creating the salary schedule, it was noted a correction to page 4 to remove "plus \$1,000" from "For all other positions Year 1" was necessary. The Whitman Hanson Education Association is aware of the error and in agreement.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to correct the Unit B MOA to correct page 4 to re remove "plus \$1,000" from "For all other positions Year 1", as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

FY2019 YTD Expenditures and Revenue Reports

Christine Suckow presented the year to date Encumbrances and Revenue Reports. She noted that substitute lines are over budget due to the number of staff leaves of absence. Mrs. Suckow also reported on concerns with school choice account and unanticipated students choice out for full day kindergarten and TECCA online high school, special education costs, contracted and legal services, transportation and tuition costs totaling \$618,000 this current year. In addition, the McKinney-Vento Act homeless transportation line is in a deficit of just over \$8,000.

FY2020 Budget, Local Assessment and Certify FY2020 Budget

The Superintendent updated the Committee on recent meetings with local officials and department heads. In the recent meeting with the Hanson Finance Committee, they confirmed support of a 6.5% assessment increase. In a recent meeting with the Whitman Finance Committee and in attending department head meetings at Whitman Town Hall, support for both 4% and 6.5% assessment increases were discussed. Mr. Szymaniak spoke of equity in all departments and referred to the 3.1% overall budget increase for South Shore Vocational Technical (SSVT) School and differences in the amount in per pupil expenditures. Whitman-Hanson spends \$12,740 and the SSVT expenditure is \$21,142. If the Whitman-Hanson School District's budget were to be funded at 3.1%, the assessment increase would be at 8.5%.

An assessment increase of 6.5% would increase the budget deficit \$1.7 million. The impact of the deficit, and without a transfer of funds from the Excess and Deficiency (E&D) account, would be staff cuts to three non-union employees, a guidance counselor, the elimination of the foreign language program at the middle schools, staff cuts to three elementary duty aides, three elementary paraprofessionals, a part-time music teacher and 19 classroom teachers K-12. All non-professional status teachers will receive reduction-in-force notification in the next two days with an impending 6.5% local assessment. Mr. Szymaniak reported on his tour of the buildings with School Committee members to get a real time, true picture of all types of students and teachers working together. He appreciated what they were able to experience in seeing high ability students to struggling students to teachers that care about students. The Committee experienced culture and acceptance in our schools and can relay what they saw to the community and taxpayers and understand how well the District does with insufficient funding and work to move per pupil expenditure up from 7th or 10th from the bottom. The 6.5% assessment increase will maintain the curriculum the administration intends to provide next year. It also retains a commitment to social and emotional support needs, although there will be staff lay-offs. Chair Hayes re-iterated the difference between a local assessment increase and a school budget increase and the budget process and funding mechanisms. To meet the date the Committee must set a

local assessment; an assessment must be set at this evening's meeting, but can always be lowered at subsequent meetings until the town meeting date.

Mr. Szymaniak confirmed the proposed budget for level services is \$53,270,534. A local assessment increase of 15.1% would fund the budget deficit. Mr. Trotta opened a discussion for a vote on the local assessment and to determine the impact at a 10% assessment increase. Christine Suckow confirmed there is currently \$961,237 in the E&D account. Mrs. Suckow also confirmed the special education line is currently \$650,000 over budget. Mr. Small suggested eliminating professional development and travel prerequisites for School Committee saving approximately \$5,000.

The Committee deliberated utilizing funds from the Excess and Deficiency (E&D) account to fund the budget deficit. Chair Hayes cautioned using considerable funds out of the E&D fund that is typically reserved for unanticipated emergencies.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Howard seconded; voted to transfer \$561,237 from the Excess & Deficiency to the FY2020 proposed budget. The motion passed 7-2-0. Mr. Cullity and Mr. Howard opposed.

Christine Suckow reported a transfer of \$561,237 to the budget would move the local assessment increase required for level services to 12.5%. Chair Hayes provided the following figures at a 12.5% local assessment based on the current October 1 student enrollment. The operating assessment to the Town of Whitman would be \$14,928,958. The operating assessment to the Town of Hanson would be \$10,027,508.

There were a number of emotional and passionate testimonies from parents, teachers, community members, Whitman town officials, and a current Whitman-Hanson high school student at the meeting in support of funding the school district at equity and level services.

Mr. Bois motioned to amend the assessment to 12.5%. The motion failed as there was no second.

Mr. Small motioned to amend the assessment to 6.5%. The motion failed as there was no second to the motion.

Mr. Trotta reminded the Committee he had suggested a starting point of a 10% assessment increase for the purpose of discussion projected class size and importance of saving teacher positions and instructional aides that assist in Individualized Education Plan (IEP) services. Mr. Howard spoke to having the tools to make the most informed decision and understand the budget impact on several assessment scenarios.

Superintendent Szymaniak stated at 10%, there will still be some cuts and can provide tiered budget impact figures once he reviews the adjustment to the budget after the E&D transfer and a review of retirements and unanticipated resignations.

Chair Hayes set the next meeting of the School Committee was scheduled for April 24, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Trotta stated his concern with cutting as few positions as possible and save paraprofessionals and maintain appropriate class size. A motion by Mr. Cullity to amend the assessment to a 10% increase was seconded by Mr. Bois. After additional, considerable deliberation and another round of ardent testimony to support a 12.5% local assessment increase, Mr. Cullity withdrew his motion and Mr. Bois withdrew his second.

VOTE: Mr. Bois motioned; Mr. Howard seconded; voted to amend the operating assessment at an increase of 12.5%, as discussed. The motion passed 7-1-0. Mr. Small opposed.

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to amend the operating assessment to the Town of Whitman for the FY2020 budget in accordance with the PK-12 Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Agreement, Section IV, Para. D and E and M.G.L. c.71, § 16B at \$14,928,958 The motion passed 7-1-0. Mr. Small opposed.

VOTE: Mr. Bois motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to amend the operating assessment to the Town of Hanson for the FY2020 budget in accordance with the PK-12 Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Agreement, Section IV, Para. D and E and M.G.L. c.71, § 16B at \$10,027,508 The motion passed 7-1-0. Mr. Small opposed.

VOTE: Mr. Bois motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to set the operating assessment at \$24,956,467 approving the FY2020 assessments in accordance with the PK-12 Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Agreement, Section IV, Paragraph D and E and M.G.L. c70 §16B and certify the FY2020 school district budget at ~~\$52,699,127~~ \$53,270,534 (corrected post meeting per the voted assessment figures). The motion passed 7-1-0. Mr. Small opposed.

Unfinished Business

MSBA Statement of Interest (SOI) – WMS

Chair Hayes informed the Committee that a formal vote is needed for the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Regional School Committee to provide an overview of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process and to request information from Whitman town officials regarding their interest in the submission of a Statement of Interest for a CORE Program project for the Whitman Middle School building.

In addition, at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 9, 2019, The Town of Whitman Board of Selectmen voted to approve the Statement of Interest (SOI) for a CORE Program project for the Whitman Middle School building.

Lastly, all documentation must be submitted to MSBA no later than April 12, 2019.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted as resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on April 10, 2019, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Whitman-Hanson Regional School Committee of the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 12, 2019 for the Whitman Middle School located at 100 Corthell Avenue, Whitman, MA, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City/Town/Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Acceptance of Gifts

Chair Hayes presented a memo from Mr. Marshall Ottina, Duval Elementary School PTO Co-Treasurer, to accept a donation of air conditioning units for the Duval Elementary School. Chair Hayes read the contents of the letter.

”This February, the students of Duval Elementary participated in our 2nd annual Boosterthon Glow Run. Thanks to donations from friends, families, and businesses, we are able to raise over \$22,000 to fund capital improvements at our building. The primary goal of this fundraising effort was to purchase air conditioning units for several of our classrooms. After working with Ernie Sandland, whose help has been extraordinary, we have determined that we can install units in 17 classrooms for a price of no more than \$19,000. This will include the cost of the units themselves, and any wiring and fencing needs as deemed necessary by Mr. Sandland.” Mr. Sandland confirmed that during the April vacation break, a unit will be installed and cost savings will be measured.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to accept the donation of 17 classroom air conditioning units, including wiring and fencing needs, for the Duval Elementary School not to exceed \$19,000, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Field Trips

Hanson Middle School Annual Grade 8 Field Trip to Washington D.C. June 3-7, 2019

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to waive nurse approve the overnight, out-of-state Hanson Middle School Annual Grade 8 Field Trip to Washington D.C. June 3-7, 2019, as presented. The motion passed. Mr. O’Brien abstained 7-0-1.

Whitman Middle School Annual Grade 8 Field Trip to New York and Philadelphia June 4-7, 2019

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to approve the overnight, out-of-state Whitman Middle School Annual Grade 8 Field Trip to New York and Philadelphia June 4-7, 2019, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Subcommittee Reports

Warrant Subcommittee

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to approve the Warrant Subcommittee minutes dated March 28, 2019, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

The following warrants were signed at the School Committee meeting.

<u>Warrant</u>	<u>Amount</u>
041019AP	\$1,281,131.71
041019FS	\$39,215.40
P41119	\$1,227,154.10

Policy Subcommittee

There was nothing new to report.

Facilities and Capital Improvements Subcommittee

There was nothing new to report.

Legislative Update

Mr. Small reported the House Ways and Means Committee released their proposed budget.

Pilgrim Area Collaborative Representative Report

Mr. Bois reported the Collaborative met on April 4, 2019.

The Executive Director is following the entry plan. The Collaborative is seeking to purchase a school building in an effort to house combined programs.

Meeting Adjournment

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded: voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michelle Lindberg

School Committee Secretary

Meeting Handouts:

- Meeting agenda for March 11, 2019
- Meeting Minutes for approval
 - March 11, 2019 School Committee
 - March 13, 2019 School Committee
 - March 27, 2019 School Committee and Whitman Finance Committee
 - April 2, 2019 School Committee and Hanson Finance Committee
- North River Collaborative - Amended Agreement voting language
- Documentation regarding Conley School closing on March 15, 2019
- Corrected Unit B MOA - Page 4 removed “plus \$1,000” from “For all other positions Year 1”
- Voting Language certify the budget and local assessments
- MSBA Statement of Interest for Whitman Middle School Voting Language
- Letter to Town of Whitman request to vote on Whitman Middle SOI
- Field Trip Requests:
 - Whitman Middle School Grade 8 annual trip to New York and Philadelphia June 4-7, 2019
 - Hanson Middle School Grade 8 annual trip to Washington D.C. June 3-7, 2019
- Warrant Subcommittee minutes dated March 28, 2019
- YTD Revenue and Expenditures Reports
- Three Year History – Special Education Costs
- DESE Student Learning Time Regulations 603 CMR 27.00 and Guidelines of 180 day requirement
- Duval PTO Request to accept donation for \$19,000 for air condition units and installation in 17 classrooms