

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of May 15, 2019
Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School
600 Franklin Street, Whitman MA

Meeting convened: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 8:50 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Robert Trotta, Frederick Small, Robert O'Brien, Jr., Daniel Cullity, Christopher Scriven, Christopher Howard, Michael Jones, Alexandria Taylor and Steve Bois (arrived at 7:04 p.m.)

Members absent: None

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

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

Approval of Minutes

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of the School Committee meeting of April 10, 2019 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of the School Committee meeting of April 24, 2019 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of the School Committee and Whitman Finance Committee joint meeting of May 1, 2019 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Student Advisory Report

Marah Burt, Student Council School Committee Representative, was not present to report.

Recognition of school committee member Robert Trotta

Chair Hayes announced this evening's meeting is Mr. Trotta's last meeting as a board member and presented him with a Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) years of service plaque. Mr. Trotta has served for twelve years as a board member since May 2007. Chair Hayes thanked Mr. Trotta for his commitment to education as a member. Mr. Trotta shared closing remarks with the Committee encouraging them to continue supporting public education.

Superintendent's Report

Town Meeting Results

The Superintendent reported on the Annual May Town Meeting results held on May 6 in regard to the operating budget, capital projects, and the Regional Agreement Amendment (Town of Whitman).

School Budget

Mr. Szymaniak thanked the towns of Whitman and Hanson for supporting an 8.5% local assessment increase and anticipates continued discussion for the upcoming FY2021 school budget. He reported the Town of Whitman approached him to become a part of the strategic plan in the Town of Whitman and partnering schools with the towns. Mr. Szymaniak reported that after a challenging budget cycle, difficult decisions led to a number of budget cuts and position eliminations. On a positive note, the administration was able to implement much of the strategic plan to provide math instruction, curriculum alignment and social emotional learning endeavors to be realized in the upcoming school year.

Amended Regional Agreement

Mr. Szymaniak reported that at the Whitman Annual Town meeting, Article 29, the Amended Regional Agreement, was passed over. Mr. Szymaniak anticipates meeting with town officials to define questions they may have about the agreement. Mr. Szymaniak reported he recently met with Richard Hatch, a retired Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) administrator, as a resource. The town of Hanson passed the Amended Regional Agreement at their annual town meeting in May 2018. Currently, the school district and towns are working under the old regional agreement.

FY2020 Budget Update

Mr. Szymaniak reported the school district capital items for the town of Whitman were passed over at their Annual May Town meeting and were tabled until the June 17, 2019 Special Town Meeting. Chair Hayes added that some of the warrant articles in the town of Hanson were passed over and some were approved. Chair Hayes reported the impact of the 8.5% local assessment is a loss of 19.2 positions. Mr. Szymaniak reported he and the assistant superintendent have met with some of the staff whose positions are being eliminated. Furthermore, due to unanticipated resignations and retirements, job postings will be necessary. Mr. Szymaniak is optimistic that the Governor will sign the amendment for additional resources/funding for special education and regional transportation. Mr. Small added he is expectant the per pupil minimum increase along with an increase to regional transportation reimbursement. Mr. Small discussed earmarking funds to implement a tuition-free full day kindergarten program in the upcoming school year. Mr. Szymaniak stated he is still waiting to hear confirmation of the state security grant that may be used to fund the installation of door thumb locks in schools.

FY2019 YTD Expenditures and Revenue Reports

Mr. Szymaniak provided the YTD expenditures and revenue reports, noting the special education line remains over budget.

The Committee reflected on the upcoming FY2021 budget presentation and how that may look next year. Whether it would be a Saturday morning meeting or regular evening meeting is yet to be determined. Mr. Small suggested more detail in the budget would be helpful. Mr. Szymaniak will clearly post the budget information on the district website and keep it simplified for ease of understanding. The Superintendent will remain cognizant of using the Excess & Deficiency account to fund the operating budget. He will also insure the difference between the budget and the assessment are well communicated to the public. Mr. Szymaniak and Mr. Ferro reported the district has a new vendor for the district website which will bring a cleaner, more user-friendly appearance to the site. There is also a built in phone app. Mr. Ferro added the current vendor contract is expiring at the end of June. There is no cost increase for the vendor change. In addition, there may be a cost savings next year.

Superintendent's Goals Update

Mr. Szymaniak presented his 2018-19 goals update and evidence of accomplishment in preparation for his evaluation. As a result of Committee member comments at the start of the year, he anticipates a more lucid format for his goals presentation next year.

SMART Goal 1: To monitor, evaluate and support Pillar 2 in the District Plan for Success, a cohesive Pre K-12 system of teaching and learning.

- Support the math program that is being piloted in the Elementary schools to determine which one will be purchased and adapted by the district.
- Support the ELA team that is determining which English program we will pilot in school year 2020/2021.
- Expand on special education programming to ensure quality in district programs for all students.
- Attend Elementary curriculum meetings with curriculum directors and principals
- Attend secondary curriculum meetings with curriculum directors and principals
- Evaluate the curriculum leadership model Pre K -12
- Expand role of elementary teacher leaders

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2018-2019

- District based decision to purchase Ready Math by Curriculum Associates, K-5 with sustainable funding.
- Elementary teachers will pilot in 2019/2020, Collaborative Classroom, My View, and potentially Into Reading. 20-30 teachers will pilot and focus on phonics, literacy and writing.
- Hanson Middle school will support a special education program that focuses on language based students.
- Through Unit B contract negotiations we will have a teacher leader at every grade level K-8 including special education
- Met with curriculum leadership monthly and made changes when appropriate

SMART Goal 2: To be visible throughout the district to support administrators, teachers, staff and students.

- Scheduled weekly visits to district buildings
- Coordinated time for conversations with staff members
- Walk and talk conversations with district principals
- Superintendent's Student Council meetings
- Casual conversations with staff during lunches or in the hallways
- Facilities walkthroughs with district facilities staff

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2018-2019

- Established a weekly "WH_BeTheDiffence" to a staff person
- Continued meetings over the year to discuss issues with staff
- Support of the Duval staff when classrooms and programs were re-located
- Communication with nurse leader and Conley school nurse with emergency closing of Conley school
- District visits weekly to identify facilities issues
- Walkthroughs with school committee members

SMART Goal 3: To improve and create open lines of communication in conjunction with Pillar 3, Safety and Security of students and staff.

- Superintendent's Entry Plan
- ALICE training for staff
- Grade level safety trainings for students
- Emergency communications APP
- Parent meetings related to security
- Social media
- School messenger
- Supt's corner
- Cable show with SC Chair

- Updates on issues within the district
- Designate emergency and non-emergency communication personnel

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2018-2019

- Alice training for all staff completed in September, second part will take place September 2019.
- Elementary Alice training manual completed. Implementation in 2019/2020.
- Social media presence on Facebook and Twitter
- School Messenger will combine with new website and APP for phone. Rollout in July 2019.
- Constant communication with EMS in both towns along with DPW's and Highway for emergencies and weather related events.
- Designated a chain of command within central office for emergency notifications.
- Met with local cable and appeared in programming when asked.
- Met with SEPAC and local EMS to increase communication with police/fire and special education students and parents.

SMART Goal 4: To develop a workable budget that will deliver services and create opportunities so Whitman-Hanson students are prepared higher education, the workforce, or military service.

- Attend meetings with town officials and community members
- Align Budget to Strategic Plan (RADAR)
- Advocate for appropriate reimbursements from the state
- Engage all stakeholders to support the district budget
- Assess schools for capital improvements
- Assess schools for safety and security

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2018-2019

- Rollout of the district budget in December 2018
- Multiple meetings with the finance committee to establish a budget number
- Meetings with the BOS to advocate for new middle school and for the district budget
- Attend town department meetings when asked and advocate for the district
- Support the 5 year capital plan and prioritize items.
- Apply for safety grants made available from the state.

Beyond stated goals, Mr. Szymaniak added the following points.

- Mentor four new principals, an assistant superintendent, special education director, and transportation supervisor.
- Prioritize budget cuts and make the difficult decisions always keeping the best interest of students in mind.
- Successfully close a building due to illness.
- Successfully relocate a building during a water crisis.
- Maintained a consistent media presence providing essential information to the community.
- Successfully negotiated Unit B and revised how curriculum is being led in the district.
- Maintain a social emotional commitment to staff in a difficult budget allowing the district to hire three elementary adjustment counselors in 2019/2020.
- Attended Professional Development for superintendents throughout the year to better my practice.

North River Collaborative Report

Mr. Szymaniak reported that Holbrook Public Schools was officially added as a member district. The Executive Directors' evaluation will be processed at the next meeting.

Unfinished Business

Director of Student Services Recommendation

Mr. Szymaniak recommended the Committee appoint Mrs. Lauren Mathisen as the Director of Student Services. Mrs. Mathisen is currently the Interim. Mr. Szymaniak reported she has adjusted very well in the role and has worked to develop a language based special education program at the Hanson Middle School for out of district placements not offered in other districts. This is an opportunity to bring out-placed students back in-district.

VOTE: Mr. O'Brien motioned; Mr. Small seconded; to appoint Lauren Mathisen as the Director of Student Services effective immediately. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Mathisen commented on her transition in the interim position over the school year and commended her executive administrative assistant, Lisa Forbes, for her knowledge and assistance through the learning curve. Mrs. Mathisen spoke to the BRYT program which was implemented at the high school three years earlier as a program designed to assist students with return to high school both academically and socially that provides tutoring and transition support for students absent for medical or social/emotional/behavioral issues longer than five consecutive days. Mrs. Mathisen added that a similar program is needed at the middle school level.

Maquan School Update

Superintendent Szymaniak reported he and the assistant superintendent recently toured the Maquan School. The final process of clearing out the building is in progress. The Maquan School will be completely turned over to the town of Hanson on June 30, 2019.

Academic School Calendar 2019-2020Y

The Superintendent presented the proposed 2019-2020 academic school year calendar.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to approve the 2019-2020 Academic School Year Calendar, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Driver Education Rate Proposal

A proposal to increase the Driver Education fees for the upcoming year from Clifford Zdenek, Driver Education Coordinator, was presented as follows:

This is a request to increase the fee structure of the Driver Education program at Whitman-Hanson Regional High School effective July 1, 2019. The reasons for the request are the increasing costs of labor, rising price of fuel and the need to upgrade classroom materials and driving equipment. Please refer to below comp analysis of local Private Driving Schools compared to the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School program. I would like to propose to increase the classroom cost for Driver Education from \$645 to \$700. The reason for the increase is to fund a replacement of the driver education vehicle, a 2013 Chevrolet Cruze that will need replacing over the next year. The proposed increase would grow the budget by \$4,000 dollars for the 2019-2020 school year based on the current 2018-2019 year budget. The new class price cost would still be \$20-\$100 less than surrounding private programs.

PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DRIVER ED FEES

The WHRSD Driver Education program requests to increase program fees as follows:

Current Fees:	Complete program- \$ 645
	Road test appointment- \$125
Proposed Increase:	Complete program- \$700
	Road test appointment- \$150 (use of program vehicle)

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Last Fee Increase: 2017

The Committee deliberated for a length of time. Mr. Small had questions with regard to the needs of a driver education vehicle replacement and if there are any existing vehicle loan programs through car dealerships. He also requested a financial report on the program. Mr. Szymaniak reported the program is currently making strides to recover from budget issues. The program was losing clients to private driver education companies due to the lack of select program schedule driving hours and summer offerings, which are now being presented. Mr. Szymaniak will also confirm if resident students receive a tuition discount. The Superintendent will have the Business Services Director provide a financial statement for the Committee. Mr. Szymaniak added that the program was due to be cut in October 2018 because the program was declining. As a result of a change in the program coordinator position, the district is working towards a sustainable driver education program. Several members commented they are not opposed to the fee increase which could provide an opportunity to make the program work.

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to approve the proposal to adjust Driver Education fees effective in the upcoming summer of 2019, as presented. The motion passed 9-1-0. Mr. Small opposed.

Job Descriptions

Mr. Ferro presented three updated job descriptions for the Committee's approval.

Secondary Curriculum Chair

As a result of the restructuring of Unit B administrators, responsibilities needed to be made clearer and to separate the job description for k-12 to the secondary chair position from elementary level.

VOTE: Mr. Trotta motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to approve the Secondary Curriculum Chair job description, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Elementary Curriculum Coordinator

As a result of the restructuring of Unit B administrators, responsibilities needed to be made clear for this elementary position. This position has not yet been posted and is a full-time, non-teaching position under Unit B. There are no additional costs to this position. The previous model of curriculum directors K-12 was not as effective at the elementary level as anticipated. Mr. Trotta who was part of the negotiations process, endorsed the new structure to break out 6-12 and add elementary.

VOTE: Mr. Bois motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded: voted to approve the Elementary Curriculum Coordinator job description, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Instructional Education Facilitator

Mr. Ferro reported this is a version of previous position that was eliminated in 2006. The goal is to support students, staff and educators as the district moves forward as well as assisting with the implementation of the Ready Classroom Mathematics program and iReady Diagnostic + Digital Instruction Tool, the MCAS 2.0 assessment calendar, pilot the new ELA program. This position will not be a new employee but an existing Unit A employee with instructional technology certification. In addition, with the loss of librarians around the district, this position can assist with determining education software. This position will also support Chromebook use.

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Small seconded: voted to approve the Instructional Education Facilitator job description, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

School Improvement Plans

The Committee heard from the principals around the district on the development of their school improvement plans. Mrs. Downey spoke on behalf of elementary schools, Mr. Grable spoke on behalf of middle schools and Dr. Jones spoke to the high school plan. The principals presented details of their school improvement plans, aligned with the three pillars in the Strategic Plan.

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Small seconded; voted to accept all 2019-2020 School Improvement Plans, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

There was continued discussion regarding transportation costs. Mr. Small referred to discussions in November if cost savings are attainable should student transportation be no longer outsourced and brought in house. In addition, if adjustments to school start and end times provide any a cost savings or increase. He requested an analysis on student transportation be provided. The current start times were a financial based decision by the previous administration. Mr. Szymaniak stated the district is currently under contract with First Student for the next two years. If adjustments are to be made, it would not be effective until at least the 2020-21 school year to provide sufficient notification to parents. There was continued discussion on the impact of early high school start time not being in line with surrounding districts and elementary schools on staggered schedules, which makes it challenging when scheduling student athletic events and professional development for staff. There is also a safety concern for students waiting for busses in the dark.

Field Trip Requests

Indian Head School class overnight activity

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to approve the grade 4 overnight Student Activity Night at the Indian Head School on June 7, 2019, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Hayes announced upcoming dates to remember.

- Tuesday, May 14, 2019 – Art in Bloom – High School Library
- Saturday, May 18, 2019 – Town Elections (Whitman and Hanson)
- Monday, May 20, 2019 – School Committee Re-Organization meeting at 6:00 PM
- Friday, May 24, 2019 – Duval School We Remember Ceremony – 9:30 AM
- Monday, May 27, 2019 – No School – Memorial Day Observed
- Thursday, May 23, 2019 – Last Day for Seniors
- Wednesday, May 29, 2019 High School Scholarship Night – 6:00 PM
- May 30, 2019 – Community Evening School Graduation Night – 6:00 PM Performing Arts Center
- May 31, 2019 – High School Commencement – 6:00 PM – High School Gymnasium

Subcommittee Reports

Insurance subcommittee

Chair Hayes will set up

Warrant Subcommittee

Warrants signed at the meeting:

Payroll warrant:

P50919 \$1,345,291.59

Accounts payable:

051519FS \$3,444.65

051519AP \$274,687.11

The warrant subcommittee meeting posting on May 8, 2019 was closed on May 15, 2019. Warrants signed were as follows:

Accounts Payable:

050819FS \$43,677.28
050819AP \$341,117.15

Policy Subcommittee

There was nothing new to report except an anonymous letter was received. By policy, anonymous letters are

Facilities Subcommittee

The Facilities and Capital Projects subcommittee has not met.

Legislative Update

Mr. Small reported earlier in the meeting. On behalf of the School Committee, the superintendent will invite town and local state representative to the June 12 meeting for budget discussions.

Pilgrim Area Collaborative

Mr. Bois reported there was no quorum for the May 2 meeting but there are two meeting scheduled in June. The collaborative still needs to present its budget to member districts. It is anticipated the Collaborative may purchase a building for programs.

Meeting Adjournment

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded: voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michelle Lindberg

Signature of School Committee Secretary

Meeting Handouts:

- Meeting agenda for May 15, 2019
- Meeting Minutes for approval
 - April 10, 2019 School Committee
 - April 24, 2019 School Committee
 - May 1, 2019
- Resume Packet for Lauren Mathisen, Interim Director of Student Services
- Driver Education Rate Proposal
- School Improvement Plans – electronically only
- *We Remember* Invitation from Principal Dr. Darlene Foley, Duval School
- YTD Revenue and Expenditures Reports
- Job Description updates
 - Elementary Curriculum Coordinator
 - Secondary Curriculum Chair
 - Instructional Education Facilitator
- Field Trip Request – Overnight Student Activity at Indian Head School on June 7, 2019
- School Committee meeting Calendar for 2019-20 SY
- Proposed and Updated 2019-20 SY Academic Calendar Draft