

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1163 Tuesday, April 14, 2009

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Margaret Watson, Chair	Robert Imber
John Nunnari, Vice-chair	Stacey Jackson
Thomas Ackerman	Duncan Leith
Cynthia Bazinet	Michael Pantos
Robert Carter	Norman Plourde
Colleen Cipro	Michael Sherman
Steven Hammond	Joseph Sova

Committee Members Absent:

Shirley Conrad	Robert Pelczarski
Melinda Coyle	Marcie Zaharee
Mark James	

Administration Present:

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools
John Locke, Deputy Superintendent
Darryll McCall, Director of Operations
Susan Sullivan, Director of Human Resources
Peter Brennan, Business Manager
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

Student Representatives Present:

Keara Aquino
Hillary Blakeney
Greg Savageau

Guests Present:

Anthony Cipro, Principal, Houghton Elementary School

Others present, who desired to be recorded as present (see attached Attendance Sheet – attachment 1).

Chair Watson called the regular meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:05 PM.

I. Public Hearing

No members of the public wished to address the School Committee.

II. Secretary's Report

Chair Watson called the Committee's attention to the revised agenda for the meeting, reading aloud the purpose of the executive session (attachment 2).

A. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Budget Hearing held on March 23, 2009

Motion: To approve the minutes of the Annual Budget Hearing held on March 23, 2009.

(D. Leith)
(J. Sova)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Thomas Ackerman
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

B. Approval of 1162nd Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRDSC held on March 23, 2009

Motion: To approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held March 23, 2009.

(R. Imber)
(D. Leith)

The minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held March 23, 2009 were approved, by consensus.

III. Treasurer's Report/Financial Statements

Chair Watson reminded the Committee that if there were questions regarding the Business Manager's report that Members should contact the Superintendent; if there were questions regarding the Treasurer's Report, Members should contact the Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Chair's Opening Remarks

Chair Watson reminded members materials in connection with the Superintendent's evaluation are due this date. Chair Watson expects to include the Evaluation of the Superintendent in the next Superintendent's Report.

Chair Watson introduced Houghton Elementary Principal Anthony Cipro. Principal Cipro provided the Committee with a copy of Houghton Elementary School's Mission Statement (attachment 3). Principal Cipro shared with the Committee the many positive and exciting activities and programs taking place at the elementary school in Sterling. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of Principal Cipro. At the conclusion of Principal Cipro's presentation, Chair Watson extended the thanks of the School Committee.

B. Student Representatives

Student Representative Greg Savageau reported on many high school happenings: junior prom tickets are on sale; the senior prom is planned for May 29th; the National Honor Society will be hosting a blood drive at the high school on April 17th; Model U. N will attend a conference at Fitchburg State on April 17th; the extended days have been "hard," but they are coming to an end. Mr. Savageau raised the matter of the April Fool's vandalism incident, noting the senior class seems to be the most affected and further commented that it was a "foolish mistake." Student Representative Blakeney added her comments about this incident, letting the Committee know that this incident did not take the school or the student population by storm; students were not consumed by the incident. Ms. Blakeney added, on a positive note, that the high school baseball team had won its first game on the new baseball field and she thanked Building Committee Chair Leith for his hard work.

Following the Student Representatives' report, Chair Watson instructed School Committee members to not comment on the recent vandalism incident.

C. Management Subcommittee (M. Watson, Chair, J. Nunnari, Vice-chair, C. Bazinet, M. Coyle, R. Imber, D. Leith, M. Pantos, N. Plourde, M. Sherman)

7:25 PM the Student Representatives left the meeting.

7:25 PM Superintendent Pandiscio left the table.

Chair Watson reported the Management Subcommittee has not met since the last School Committee meeting. She informed the Committee that there are two policies (in the 5000 series) that need to be thoroughly reviewed by the Management Subcommittee, but this review will be addressed by the membership of the next subcommittee. Chair Watson has received legal opinions about these policies from District Counsel McCabe.

- D. Education Subcommittee (C. Bazinet, Chair, S. Hammond, Vice-chair, R. Imber, S. Jackson, J. Nunnari, R. Pelczarski, M. Zaharee)

The report of the Education Subcommittee was deferred until Superintendent Pandiscio returns to the table.

- E. Business/Finance Subcommittee (M. Sherman, Chair, S. Conrad, Vice-chair, T. Ackerman, M. Coyle, M. James, D. Leith, M. Pantos, J. Sova)

A Business/Finance Subcommittee meeting was posted for April 8th, but did not achieve a quorum. Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Sherman announced the next meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee will be Monday, April 27th, at 6:30 PM in the Media Center.

7:26 PM Superintendent Pandiscio returned to the table.

7:27 PM Principal Cipro left the meeting.

- D. Education Subcommittee (C. Bazinet, Chair, S. Hammond, Vice-chair, R. Imber, S. Jackson, J. Nunnari, R. Pelczarski, M. Zaharee)

Subcommittee Chair Bazinet reported the Education Subcommittee had, at the request of District administration, been asked to consider the elimination of the middle school World Cultures program. Subcommittee Chair Bazinet asked that Superintendent Pandiscio speak to this matter/recommendation. The Superintendent gave the history behind the middle school world cultures program and then called the Committee's attention to page 5 of his April 9th Superintendent's Report, where he explains the rationale behind this recommendation.

Motion: The Education Subcommittee recommends to the full School Committee the elimination of the World Cultures program offered in sixth grade from academic year 2009-2010 forward.

(C. Bazinet)
(J. Sova)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Thomas Ackerman
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova

Opposed:
None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Subcommittee Chair Bazinet reported the subcommittee had reviewed the Superintendent's performance towards meeting his three education specific goals and voted approval.

- F. Community Outreach Subcommittee (C. Cipro, Chair, R. Pelczarski, Vice-chair, R. Carter, N. Plourde)

Community Outreach Chair Cipro reported this subcommittee had not met since the last School Committee meeting.

- G. Audit Advisory Board (S. Conrad, J. Sova)

Audit Advisory Board Vice-Chair Sova reported the Audit Advisory Board has been dormant. The AAB probably will not need to meet again until August.

- H. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

- I. Building Committee

1. High School

High School Building Committee Chair Leith said the Building Committee will meet April 29, 2009. He then gave a brief report on recent activity at the high school. Member Carter asked the status of the baseball fields, which Building Committee Chair Leith and Superintendent Pandiscio reported on.

J. School Council Reports:

Central Tree Middle School (M. Pantos), Chocksett Middle School (J. Sova), Davis Hill Elementary School (R. Carter), Dawson Elementary School (M. James), Glenwood Elementary School (J. Nunnari), Houghton Elementary School (S. Conrad), Mayo Elementary School (S. Hammond), Mountview Middle School (C. Bazinet), Naquag Elementary School (C. Cipro), Paxton Center School (R. Pelczarski), Thomas Prince School (R. Imber), Wachusett Regional High School (D. Leith), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (S. Jackson)

Stacey Jackson - Special Education Parent Advisory Council will meet April 15, 2009 at Davis Hill Elementary School. A parent workshop, Effective Communication, will be presented on April 29th at Paxton Center School.

Joseph Sova - Chocksett Middle School SIMCO met April 7, 2009.

Robert Imber – Thomas Prince School SIAM met March 31, 2009.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Member Jackson raised the point that the Principals' Reports were not included with the reports of Deputy Superintendent Locke and Director of Operations McCall and questioned why. The Superintendent let the Committee know "this was a test," and explained the reasoning behind the Principals' Reports being made available in the Reading File maintained at the Central Office. It was agreed that this "test" will ride for a short time, after which it will be decided how the Committee would like this matter handled – Principals' Reports copied and included with Mr. Locke's and Mr. McCall's reports or available in the Reading File.

Member Carter commended the Superintendent on his recent annual literacy initiative memorandum to elementary and middle school teachers and asked the Superintendent how long he sees this initiative continuing, to which the Superintendent answered he expects the work of the initiative to continue for at least another three years.

Chair Watson called the Committee's attention to attachment 10 of the April 9th Superintendent's Report and asked the Superintendent to explain, for the School Committee and the public, the revised School Use Application and Agreement and the new building user fees. Superintendent Pandiscio explained how the energy expense charges came about and how the amounts to be charged were determined. Chair Watson stated this recommendation is compatible with School Committee policy and the Regional Agreement and that no School Committee action is needed.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

The Committee's attention was called to attachments 6 and 7 of the April 9th Superintendent's Report (attachments 4 & 5). The Superintendent apologized to the Committee for sharing information at the April 2nd Regional Selectboard meeting before bringing it before the School Committee. The Superintendent then went on to review, point by point, the two documents.

Motion: To approve the FY10 Proposed Appropriation and the FY10 Amended Assessments, dated 4/14/09, as presented.

(R. Imber)

(J. Sova)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Thomas Ackerman
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Superintendent Pandiscio called the Committee's attention to page 4 of his April 9th Report and also to Director of Human Resources Sullivan's memorandum to him, dated March 30, 2009, attachment 12 of the April 9th Superintendent's Report. He went on to explain Chapter 32B, Section 18A and the benefits offered.

Motion: To accept provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 32B, Section 18A which provides that all retirees who retire after the acceptance of this Section, their spouses and dependents, who are enrolled in Medicare Part A, be required to transfer to a Medicare Extension Plan offered by the District, provided that the benefits under the Plan and Medicare Part A and Part B together shall be of

comparable actuarial value to those under the retiree's existing coverage. The Chapter also provides that the District shall pay any Medicare Part B premium penalty assessed by the Federal government on the retiree, spouse or dependent, as a result of enrollment in Medicare Part B at the time of transfer and that a retiree who retires prior to the acceptance of this Section by the District, his spouse and dependents, shall continue to be eligible for benefits provided under General Laws Chapter 32B, but may opt to transfer to a Medicare Extension Plan offered by the District, thereby becoming ineligible to participate in any other group health insurance benefits available to active employees under Chapter 32B.

A copy of General Laws Chapter 32B, Section 18A, as enacted by Chapter 374 of the Acts of 2008, is attached hereto and incorporated and made a part of the Motion (attachment 6).

(D. Leith)
(M. Pantos)

8:53 PM Member Pantos left the table.

Discussion of the motion ensued.

8:55 PM Member Pantos returned to the table.

Motion: To move the question.

(R. Carter)
(M. Pantos)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Thomas Ackerman
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Robert Imber

(The motion passed 13-0-1.)

Vote on original motion: To accept provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 32B, Section 18A which provides that all retirees who retire after the acceptance of this Section, their spouses and dependents, who are enrolled in Medicare Part A, be required to transfer to a Medicare Extension Plan offered by the District, provided that the benefits under the Plan and Medicare Part A and Part B together shall be of comparable actuarial value to those under the retiree's existing coverage. The Chapter also provides that the District shall pay any Medicare Part B premium penalty assessed by the Federal government on the retiree, spouse or dependent, as a result of enrollment in Medicare Part B at the time of transfer and that a retiree who retires prior to the acceptance of this Section by the District, his spouse and dependents, shall continue to be eligible for benefits provided under General Laws Chapter 32B, but may opt to transfer to a Medicare Extension Plan offered by the District, thereby becoming ineligible to participate in any other group health insurance benefits available to active employees under Chapter 32B.

A copy of General Laws Chapter 32B, Section 18A, as enacted by Chapter 374 of the Acts of 2008, is attached hereto and incorporated and made a part of the Motion (attachment 6).

(D. Leith)

(M. Pantos)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Thomas Ackerman
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova

Opposed:

None

Abstained:
Robert Imber

(The motion passed 13-0-1.)

VI. Public Hearing

No members of the public wished to address the School Committee.

VII. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business brought before the School Committee.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business to come before the Committee.

IX. Executive session for the purpose of contract negotiations; to hear complaints or charges brought against an employee; to discuss the filing of criminal complaints, not to return to public session

X. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn to executive session for the purpose of contract negotiations; to hear complaints or charges brought against an employee; to discuss the filing of criminal complaints, not to return to public session.

(J. Sova)

(M. Pantos)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Thomas Ackerman
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova

Opposed:
None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

TGP:rlp