

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1164 Monday, April 27, 2009

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

Margaret Watson, Chair	Mark James
John Nunnari, Vice-chair	Duncan Leith
Cynthia Bazinet	Michael Pantos
Robert Carter	Robert Pelczarski
Colleen Cipro	Norman Plourde
Shirley Conrad	Michael Sherman
Steven Hammond	Joseph Sova
Robert Imber	Marcie Zaharee
Stacey Jackson	

*Committee Members Absent:*

Thomas Ackerman	Melinda Coyle
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*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:*

Greg Savageau

*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 7:00 PM.

I. Public Hearing

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

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of 1163<sup>rd</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRDSC held on April 14, 2009

Motion: To approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held April 14, 2009.

(M. Pantos)

(D. Leith)

The minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held April 14, 2009 were approved, by consensus, with Members Conrad, James, Pelczarski and Zaharee abstaining.

B. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional District School Committee held on April 14, 2009

Chair Watson asked members to review the minutes and if no corrections of substance were noted, these minutes could be approved in public session. If substantive corrections are noted, the minutes would be approved in executive session.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the executive session held April 14, 2009, not to be released.

(D. Leith)

(M. Pantos)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

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

*Opposed:*

None

*Abstained:*

Shirley Conrad  
Mark James  
Robert Pelczarski  
Marcie Zaharee

(The motion passed 13-0-4)

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 took this opportunity to thank outgoing School Committee members – Tom Ackerman, Melinda Coyle (neither of whom were present), Mark James and Mike Sherman. She thanked Members Sherman, Bazinet and Cipro for chairing subcommittees this year.

Chair Watson also thanked the three Student Representatives who have done an excellent job this year. Greg Savageau would certainly be welcomed back next year. Hillary Blakeney, who served for two years, and Keara Aquino were thanked for representing the student body and were wished luck as they graduate from WRHS.

Chair Watson called the Committee's attention to Attachment 9 of the Superintendent's Report of April 23<sup>rd</sup> – the Evaluation of the Superintendent Dr. Thomas G. Pandiscio 2008-2009. Chair Watson told the Committee the raw data supporting the evaluation can be found in the Reading File at the Central Office. Chair Watson took the time to read the Summary Evaluation: Superintendent of Schools 2008-2009 (attachment 2).

Motion: To accept the Summary Evaluation: Superintendent of Schools 2008-2009, as presented.

(D. Leith)  
(S. Conrad)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Stacey Jackson  
Mark James  
Duncan Leith

Michael Pantos  
Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Joseph Sova  
Marcie Zaharee

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Chair Watson thanked those members who have volunteered to represent the School Committee at the upcoming Annual Town Meetings – Holden: Margaret Watson; Paxton: Robert Pelczarski; Princeton: Robert Imber; Rutland: John Nunnari; Sterling: Joseph Sova.

B. Student Representatives

Student Representative Greg Savageau thanked the School Committee for the work they do. Greg then went on to report on recent and upcoming activities and events: Youth Film Festival on May 1<sup>st</sup> in the Black Box Theater; Model U. N. won two awards at the April 13<sup>th</sup> conference; National Honor Society and Mountaineer Volunteers will be co-hosting a fundraiser for Hearts for Heat; SATs will be administered on May 2<sup>nd</sup>; Advance Placement exams will be administered during the next two weeks; third quarter high school report cards were distributed April 27<sup>th</sup>.

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

Chair Watson reported the Management Subcommittee has not met since the last School Committee meeting. Chair Watson thanked John Nunnari for his work on the Management Subcommittee and for his willingness to fill in for her when needed.

7:25 PM Member Pelczarski left the table.

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 has not met since the last School Committee meeting.

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

Subcommittee Chair Sherman reported on a brief meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee which took place immediately before this School Committee meeting. The subcommittee was in agreement and voted that Business Manager Peter Brennan had met his job performance goals. The subcommittee also approved the draft *Narrative to the Report of the Business and Finance Subcommittee on the Annual Evaluation of the Superintendent* dated April 8, 2009. It was noted that the Business/Finance Subcommittee does not disband and continues its responsibilities of signing warrants, etc. until the next Business/Finance Subcommittee is named. Chair Watson thanked members in advance for continuing with their responsibilities.

7:26 PM Member Pelczarski returned to the table.

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

Community Outreach Chair Cipro reported this subcommittee has completed its work for this school year.

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

Audit Advisory Board Chair Conrad reported the District auditors will be at the Central Office, probably in June, and the AAB will meet at that time.

- H. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

- I. Building Committee

- 1. High School

Chair Watson thanked Building Committee Chair Leith for his many years of service on the High School Building Committee. Chair Leith told there would be a brief meeting on April 29<sup>th</sup>, but it probably will not be the final meeting, as there will still be some bills that will need approval to pay. Building Committee Chair Leith mentioned again that he would like to invite Building Committee members, past and present, to a meeting of the School Committee to recognize them for their service to the communities. He also took the time to commend Suzanne Breen for all she did as Administrative Assistant to the building project.

- 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)

There were no School Council reports presented.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Superintendent Pandiscio distributed *FY10 Proposed Assessments 04.27.09 Based Upon House Ways & Means Budget Proposal* (attachment 3). The Superintendent walked the Committee through the document, explaining how the numbers in each of the three columns were arrived at. He told the Committee his view on three possible options: (1) "let it ride to see what the process yields;" (2) request additional assessment from Member Towns; (3) prepare to make a budget cut. Members were given, and took advantage of, the opportunity to ask questions of the Superintendent. Chair Watson asked the Superintendent if he thought it would be wise to schedule a meeting with representatives of the Member Towns, before the Annual Town Meetings, to which the Superintendent answered yes. Questions and answers continued.

Motion: To increase Member Town assessments by \$1,008,512.

(M. James)

(C. Bazinet)

Discussion continued. The Superintendent reiterated he is not recommending a budget reduction at this time/at this meeting. Discussion continued.

Motion: To table the motion on the floor, to a time certain, and to move the question.

(S. Conrad)

(M. Sherman)

Discussion continued. The possibility of tabling the motion on the floor was considered and discussed. The Superintendent suggested sending letters to the Member Towns to let them know of the motion to increase assessments, and to also let them know that the matter was tabled, if that is in fact the Committee's vote. Discussion continued. Chair Watson asked if having a special School Committee meeting on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, to which Member Town representatives would be invited, would give enough time to communicate with the towns before the first Annual Town Meeting on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup> (Sterling). Chair Watson asked for a show of hands from members indicating who would be available to meet on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

8:27 PM Member Pelczarski left the meeting.

Motion: To move the question:

(R. Carter)

(M. Pantos)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Stacey Jackson  
Mark James  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Joseph Sova  
Marcie Zaharee

*Opposed:*

None

*Abstained:*

Margaret Watson

(The motion passed 15-0-1)

Motion: To table the motion on the floor (to increase Member Town assessments by \$1,008,512) to a time certain, Thursday, May 7, 2009, at 7:00 PM.

(S. Conrad)  
(M. Sherman)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Stacey Jackson  
Mark James  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Norman Plourde

Michael Sherman  
Joseph Sova  
Marcie Zaharee

*Opposed:*  
None

*Abstained:*  
Margaret Watson

(The motion passed 15-0-1)

Discussion of the FY10 budget continued.

8:30 PM Student Representative Greg Savageau left the meeting.

When asked how the District might get to a \$1.3 million reduction, Superintendent Pandiscio explained he would look at: freezing the salaries of unrepresented employees, eliminating late busses at the high school, RIFing positions, possibly twenty. He is of the opinion that the communities and District employees need to know that jobs are in jeopardy. He said again that no vote of the Committee is needed at this time. Discussion continued.

Motion: To direct the Superintendent of Schools to correspond with Member Town officials and area legislators, inviting them to attend the special School Committee meeting on Thursday, May 7, 2009, 7:00 PM in the Media Center at the Wachusett Regional High School.

(S. Hammond)  
(M. Pantos)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Stacey Jackson  
Mark James  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Joseph Sova  
Marcie Zaharee



*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Member Pantos voiced it might be beneficial to have the DVD recording of this evening's meeting available for viewing by residents before the May 7<sup>th</sup> special School Committee meeting. Chair Watson asked Videographer Tim Ethier if that would be possible and was told yes, the DVDs would be disseminated to the towns by the end of the day April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Superintendent Pandiscio referenced an April 1, 2009 memorandum from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding school/district participation in school choice for the 2009-2010 school year. A vote of the Committee is not required, unless the District is not going to participate in school choice. The Committee considered this matter and agreed that WRSD would participate in school choice for the 2009-2010 school year. Superintendent Pandiscio will send a letter to DESE confirming WRSD's participation in school choice.

Superintendent Pandiscio was very pleased to reference attachment 8 of his April 23<sup>rd</sup> Report, the April 21, 2009 letter from the Massachusetts DESE Program Quality Assurance Services regarding the District's Correction Action Plan. The April 21<sup>st</sup> letter brought the good news that all areas of noncompliance have been corrected and no additional progress reports are required. The Superintendent commended Director of Operations Darryll McCall, Administrator of Special Education Marie Harrington and Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services Nancy Houle for all they did to address and rectify areas of noncompliance within a year's time. Chair Watson echoed Superintendent Pandiscio's words of congratulations, adding a thank you to the special education task force for their time and attention.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

There were no matters that required action by the School Committee

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

Member Carter asked about a gifted education program being implemented, especially in the elementary schools. The Superintendent responded that, at this time, it was not something that is on the front burner, but he said he would brainstorm with principals and executive staff and would report back to the School Committee sometime during the summer months.

- IX. Executive session for the purpose of contract negotiations, not to return to public session
- X. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn to executive session for the purpose of contract negotiations, not to return to public session.

(R. Imber)  
(M. Pantos)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Stacey Jackson  
Mark James  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Joseph Sova  
Marcie Zaharee

*Opposed:*

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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