

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1167 Monday, July 20, 2009

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

|                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Margaret Watson, Chair   | Stacey Jackson       |
| John Nunnari, Vice-chair | Julianne Kelley      |
| Cynthia Bazinet          | Duncan Leith         |
| Robert Carter            | Michael Pantos       |
| Colleen Cipro            | Robert Pelczarski    |
| William Clute            | Norman Plourde       |
| Sherry Conrad            | Michelle Sciabarrasi |
| Kristine Goodwin         | Kori Stuart          |
| Steven Hammond           | Dawn Torres-Gale     |

*Committee Members Absent:*

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| Robert Imber | Joseph Sova |
|--------------|-------------|

*Administration Present:*

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools  
Susan Sullivan, Director of Human Resources  
Peter Brennan, Business Manager  
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

*Student Representatives Present:*

None

*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 7:01 PM. Chair Watson informed those present that microphones are not being used when recording this meeting and asked that speakers talk loudly and clearly so their comments can be captured by the videotaping equipment being used.

I. Public Hearing

Karen Schofield, Co-chair of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council, read a prepared statement (attachment 2).

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 1166<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRDSC held on June 8, 2009

Motion: To approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held June 8, 2009.

(D. Leith)  
(C. Bazinet)

The minutes of the regular meeting of the School Committee held June 8, 2009 were approved, by consensus, with Member Conrad abstaining.

- B. Approval of the Minutes of Special School Committee Meeting #285 held on June 23, 2009

Member Goodwin noted a correction to the motion found on page 5 of the DRAFT minutes. The motion made June 23, 2009 should read:

Motion: The District Business Office be directed to contact the bus transportation provider about the possibility of offering late bus transportation as a service to students, such arrangement to be worked through parents and also that the Business Office provide vendor resources for school PTAs to look into the possibility of late bus services.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the special School Committee meeting held June 23, 2009, as corrected.

(M. Pantos)  
(S. Hammond)

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

- C. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRDSC held on June 23, 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 June 23, 2009.

(S. Conrad)  
(M. Pantos)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*

None

(The motion passed 18-0)

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 announced that New Member Orientation, which is required by law, will be offered by MASC Executive Director Glenn Koocher on Tuesday, September 8, 2009, from 4:00 – 8:00 PM at the District Central Office. New School Committee members are strongly encouraged to attend this in-District orientation and veteran members are always welcome.

Chair Watson distributed copies of two MASC booklets, *A Guide for Effective School Committee/Colleague Relationships* and *School Committee-Superintendent Partnerships* (attachments 3 & 4). Chair Watson spoke about the roles and functions of members of school committees. If members have questions, they were invited to contact Chair Watson.

Chair Watson referenced a letter from District Counsel Leo McCabe, dated July 6, 2009, a copy of which had been included in the Superintendent's July 16, 2009 Report (attachment 5). School Committee members' attendance at subcommittee executive sessions was discussed.

B. Student Representatives (Greg Savageau, Leanne Becker, Katie Carlson)

There were no Student Representatives in attendance.

C. Management Subcommittee (M. Watson, Chair, C. Bazinet, R. Imber, J. Kelley, D. Leith, J. Nunnari, N. Plourde)

Chair Watson reported the Management Subcommittee has not yet met, but she is looking to schedule a meeting in August.

D. Education Subcommittee (C. Bazinet, Chair, S. Hammond, R. Imber, S. Jackson, J. Nunnari, R. Pelczarski, N. Plourde, D. Torres-Gale)

Subcommittee Chair Bazinet reported the Education Subcommittee has not yet met, but she is looking to schedule a meeting in August.

E. Business/Finance Subcommittee (D. Leith, Chair, S. Conrad, Vice-chair, R. Carter, W. Clute, M. Pantos, M. Sciabarrasi, J. Sova)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Leith reported on that subcommittee's meeting of June 16, 2009.

Motion: To recommend to the full School Committee that the Chair of the School Committee appoint an Ad Hoc Subcommittee, to include but not be limited to the School Administration (2), the School Committee (2), Teachers (2), and one Parent Representative from each School, to a maximum of 20, to create a budget development campaign for voluntary contributions in order to make up the budget deficit.

(D. Leith)

(D. Torres-Gale)

Member Goodwin made a friendly amendment to delete the last eight words of the motion. This friendly amendment was accepted by the maker and seconder of the motion.

Subcommittee Chair Leith re-read the amended motion.

Motion: To accept the motion to amend.

(D. Leith)

(D. Torres-Gale)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*

None

(The motion passed 18-0)

Motion: To recommend to the full School Committee that the Chair of the School Committee appoint an Ad Hoc Subcommittee, to include but not be limited to the School Administration (2), the School Committee (2), Teachers (2), and one Parent Representative from each School, to a maximum of 20, to create a budget development campaign for voluntary contributions.

(D. Leith)

(D. Torres-Gale)

Discussion of the motion on the floor ensued. Business Manager Brennan gave history of previous exploration into a charitable trust. Comment was made that an ad hoc subcommittee would not have authority to allocate funds. Subcommittee Chair Leith re-read the motion at the request of Member Goodwin. Business Manager Brennan again spoke to help clarify the difference between a charitable trust vs 501C3. The District does not have a charitable trust. The District does have gifts and grants accounts. The question was raised if parent representation on the ad hoc subcommittee could be a School Committee member who is a parent. The response was negative. Chair Watson re-read the motion before the Committee took a roll call vote.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed 18-0)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Leith reported that a second motion that had been discussed at the June 16<sup>th</sup> Business/Finance meeting will not be presented to the full Committee at this time. He will seek clarification from the subcommittee before presenting the motion to the full Committee.

- F. Community Outreach Subcommittee (C. Cipro, Chair, R. Carter, K. Goodwin, R. Pelczarski, M. Sciabarrasi, K. Stuart, D. Torres-Gale)

Subcommittee Chair Cipro reported the Community Outreach Subcommittee has not yet met, but she is looking to schedule a meeting in September.

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

Audit Advisory Board Chair Conrad reported the AAB did meet with District auditors Powers & Sullivan. The AAB will meet again after Powers & Sullivan complete field work in August.

The Committee was reminded that an investment policy needs to be developed.

- H. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

1. Ad Hoc Subcommittee for Impact Bargaining with the Superintendent of Schools (N. Plourde, Chair, C. Bazinet, C. Cipro, D. Leith, J. Nunnari)

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Chair Plourde reported that the ad hoc subcommittee had met in executive session immediately before this School Committee meeting. He informed the Committee that Sections 1.1 and 3.1 of the Superintendent's contract will be considered by the full School Committee in executive session at the end of this regular meeting.

I. Building Committee (D. Leith, Chair)

1. High School

Building Committee Chair Leith expects to call at least one more meeting of the Building Committee to review and approve payment of any last minute bills. When asked why the project architect continues to bill the District, Building Committee Chair Leith explained that there are still some last minute items that need to be addressed in order for the District to receive the final payment from the state. Building Committee Chair Leith reported the project is at "the finish line."

8:05 PM Member Pelczarski left the table.

Superintendent Pandiscio spoke of these last minute details, commissioning, completion specifications, etc., explaining for the Committee what is required.

8:08 PM Member Pelczarski returned to the table.

J. School Council Reports:

Central Tree Middle School (M. Pantos), Chocksett Middle School (J. Sova), Davis Hill Elementary School (R. Carter), Dawson Elementary School (D. Torres-Gale), Glenwood Elementary School (J. Kelley), Houghton Elementary School (S. Conrad/N. Plourde), Mayo Elementary School (S. Hammond), Mountview Middle School (K. Goodwin), Naquag Elementary School (C. Cipro), Paxton Center School (W. Clute), Thomas Prince School (R. Imber/M. Sciabarrasi), Wachusett Regional High School (D. Leith), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (S. Jackson), Early Childhood Center (S. Jackson)

There were no School Council reports given.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

When asked details of where aide positions were cut in the schools, Superintendent Pandiscio referenced a document listing the schools and where

aides positions were cut and told the Committee he would provide a copy of the document in his next Report.

When asked for an update on how the Criminal History Systems Review Board is handling the backlog of requests for CORI checks, the Superintendent reported he has recently been assured that the turn around time should be closer to fifteen days, rather than the previously anticipated six weeks.

Member Conrad requested a report of the affect of teacher reductions at the high school, which the Superintendent will provide. Member Conrad also inquired about the number of administrators at WRHS in comparison with the number of students attending WRHS. Superintendent Pandiscio explained how the smaller learning model works, hoping to make clear to the Committee the responsibilities of high school administrators and assistant principals. Member Bazinet suggested a primer explaining the duties of an assistant principal might be helpful to the Committee.

Attachment 4 of the Superintendent's July 16, 2009 Report (DESE FY08 Expenditures Per Pupil) was referenced and discussed at length.

The reduction of aide positions was again raised and the question was asked if problems could be expected with students' IEPs. Superintendent Pandiscio explained that the Administrator of Special Education conducted an "audit" of ed plans and aide assignments before aide positions were reduced. Superintendent Pandiscio acknowledged that during the school year he could receive a request for an additional aide from a building principal. He continued by saying that in the past, when such a request is justified, he has not denied such a request.

Superintendent Pandiscio briefly explained the GIC information that was contained in his latest Report. When asked, the Superintendent reported that GIC open enrollment was in April, with a July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 deadline for enrollment for this year.

Attachment 8 of the Superintendent's July 16, 2009 Report (*When is a promise not a promise?*) was discussed and found to be enlightening by members. Members agreed this is important information which legislators and the public should be aware of. It was agreed that all need to understand how transportation funding affects regional districts.

Upon inquiry, Director of Human Resources Sullivan reported that teachers needed to re-license by June 17<sup>th</sup>, per DESE, and all WREA members are certified.

9:05 PM Member Pantos left the table.

The topic of aides was again raised and discussion ensued.



9:08 PM Member Pantos returned to the table.

A final comment was made as this portion of the agenda drew to a close that the School Committee should take care not to micro-manage and to allow District administration to see to the duties of running the District.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

Motion: That the total amount authorized and appropriated for the addition and renovations to the Wachusett Regional High School as part of what is known as the high school building project be set at a not-to-exceed amount of \$84,500,000.

(S. Conrad)  
(S. Hammond)

Superintendent Pandiscio spoke to this motion, noting that he cannot promise that there may not be another vote needed on the high school building project appropriation. Chair Watson asked if members had questions they would like to ask before voting on this motion. No questions were asked.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*

None

(The motion passed 18-0)

VI. Public Hearing

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

VII. Unfinished Business

Member Carter asked that status of his request for information regarding the District's gifted education. The Superintendent reported District administration is working on gathering this information and will present it to the School Committee when compilation is complete.

VIII. New Business

Motion: The School Committee establish a public, announcement only e-mail list for the purpose of informing the public of budgetary and programmatic concerns and changes under consideration by the School Committee. This list to be established before the start of the academic year.

(S. Hammond)  
(C. Bazinet)

Member Pantos made a friendly amendment to add language that this information would be web archived for those not interested in signing up for an email list. Member Goodwin made a friendly amendment adding the words "as agreed upon by the School Committee" after the words "budgetary and programmatic."

Discussion ensued. During this discussion, the Superintendent acknowledged that communication from the Central Office was not as good as it could have been during this past spring's budget season. Discussion continued. Following discussion, the maker and seconder of the motion withdrew the motion.

Motion: To remand to the Community Outreach Subcommittee for further study the suggestion of establishing a public, announcement only e-mail list for the purpose of informing the public of budgetary and programmatic concerns and changes under consideration by the School Committee. This list to be established before the start of the academic year.

(S. Hammond)  
(C. Bazinet)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad

Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed 18-0)

Motion: That the Chair of the School Committee name an ad hoc subcommittee to investigate the possible regionalization of District middle schools.

(K. Stuart)

(J. Kelley)

Chair Watson cautioned members that such regionalization would require a change in the Regional Agreement.

Lengthy discussion followed, after which the motion on the floor was withdrawn by the maker and seconder of the motion.

Motion: To direct the administration to review school building capacity and to report back to the School Committee.

(K. Stuart)

(S. Hammond)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos

Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed 18-0)

Motion: That the Chair of the School Committee allow Holden School Committee representatives to represent the School Committee at Holden Days in August 2009.  
(D. Torres-Gale)  
(R. Carter)

9:59 PM Superintendent Pandiscio left the table.

The fee associated with having a booth at Holden Days was discussed and all agreed the School Committee should seek a waiver of this fee.

Motion: To extend the meeting for 30 minutes until 10:30 PM.  
(M. Pantos)  
(S. Hammond)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed 18-0)

10:02 PM Member Conrad left the table.

10:02 PM Superintendent Pandiscio returned to the table.

10:05 PM Member Conrad returned to the table.

After discussion of the fee associated with Holden Days, the maker and seconder of the motion amended the wording of the motion.

Motion: School Committee members will attend the August 2009 Holden Days event representing the School Committee, providing the fee associated with this event is waived for the School Committee.

(D. Torres-Gale)

(R. Carter)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Robert Pelczarski  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*

Norman Plourde

*Abstained:*

Margaret Watson

(The motion passed 16-1-1)

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

X. Adjournment

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

(M. Pantos)  
(S. Hammond)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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