

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Executive Session

Monday, July 23, 2012

Media Center

Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Duncan Leith, Chair	Sarah LaMountain
Colleen Cipro, Vice-chair	James Mason
Cynthia Bazinet	Kenneth Mills
William Clute	Robert Pelczarski
Steven Hammond	Norman Plourde
Lance Harris	Robert Remillard
Stacey Jackson	Erik Scheinfeldt
Julianne Kelley	Michelle Sciabarrasi
Deidre Kosky	Margaret Watson

Committee Members Absent:

Robert Imber	Athas Tsongalis
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Administration Present:

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

Chair Leith called the executive session of the School Committee to order at 6:05 PM and he immediately turned the meeting over to Superintendent Pandiscio. It was noted for the record that Peter Brennan had been officially notified of this executive session and was given the opportunity to attend, with counsel, if he so desired. Mr. Brennan declined the opportunity to attend the executive session. Superintendent Pandiscio distributed handouts: July 23, 2012 memorandum to Thomas G. Pandiscio, from Susan Sullivan and Kelley Gangi (attachment 1); WRSD Governmental Funds, Fiduciary Funds Cash & Fund Balances Report (attachment 2); WRSD FY12 Budget (attachment 3); July 23, 2012 email correspondence from the Superintendent to the School Committee (attachment 4); draft public statement (attachment 5). The Superintendent stated the reasons for the executive session are to consider the discipline of an employee, the recently found FY12 budget deficit, and the leadership of the District, the Superintendent. Superintendent Pandiscio distributed his July 23, 2012 confidential memorandum to the School Committee (attachment 6). Chair Leith reminded members that documents reviewed in executive session and discussions that take place in executive session are confidential and should be kept confidential until the matter is settled. Superintendent Pandiscio carefully reviewed attachment 1, explaining to the School Committee what led to the \$1.2M error found when the FY12 close-out was being done. He reviewed

and explained the information on attachments 2 and 3. Many members had questions, which the Superintendent answered. Much discussion took place.

Motion: To terminate Business Manager Peter Brennan for non-performance of duties and job abandonment.

(E. Scheinfeldt)
(R. Remillard)

More discussion and questions ensued.

Motion: To amend the motion on the table, to include "effective immediately, July 23, 2012."

(M. Watson)
(S. Hammond)

Roll call vote on amendment:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
Cynthia Bazinet
William Clute
Steven Hammond
Lance Harris
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Deidre Kosky
Sarah LaMountain
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Robert Remillard
Erik Scheinfeldt
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion: To terminate Business Manager Peter Brennan for non-performance of duties and job abandonment, effective immediately, July 23, 2012.

(E. Scheinfeldt)
(R. Remillard)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
Cynthia Bazinet
William Clute
Steven Hammond
Lance Harris
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Deidre Kosky
Sarah LaMountain
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Robert Remillard
Erik Scheinfeldt
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

Motion passed unanimously.

Members were asked to read the prepared draft public statement (attachment 5), a statement that will be read aloud at the public session. The draft public statement was discussed and edited.

Motion: Chair Leith will read aloud the following statement, in public session to follow the executive session:

This evening in executive session the Wachusett Regional School District Committee voted to terminate the contract of Peter Brennan, its Business Manager. Mr. Brennan was dismissed for failure to perform his duties as the District's chief financial officer in a satisfactory manner. Specifically, Mr. Brennan failed to forecast growth in the health insurance budget in an adequate manner. He ignored the District's standard practice of using spending history to predict future expense and instead relied on the previous year's budget to make his prediction. The result is that the District will be forced to make significant cuts in other line items in order to account for this shortfall and balance its budget. These reductions will be proposed this evening.

More recently Mr. Brennan left the FY12 budget out of balance by utilizing a faulty spreadsheet of his creation to guide District spending. It is clear that a costly error for which Mr. Brennan is responsible occurred. Currently District staff is working to address this issue so that the budget can be brought into balance. Member

Town contributions for FY12 will not be affected. All adjustments to the FY12 budget will be made during August in accordance with typical District practice.

(S. Hammond)
(M. Watson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
Cynthia Bazinet
William Clute
Steven Hammond
Lance Harris
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Robert Remillard
Erik Scheinfeldt
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Deidre Kosky

Motion passed 17-1.

Superintendent Pandiscio's July 23, 2012 confidential memorandum to the School Committee was addressed (attachment 6). Following some discussion, Chair Leith scheduled a special meeting of the School Committee for Monday, August 6, 2012, at which time the content of the Superintendent's confidential memorandum will be discussed.

Motion: To approve and release the minutes of the June 27, 2012 executive session of the School Committee.

(M. Watson)
(L. Harris)

Member Jackson made one correction to the draft minutes, substituting "\$1.4M" for "\$1M plus" in the first paragraph of the draft minutes.

Motion: To approve and release the minutes of the June 27, 2012 executive session of the School Committee, as corrected.

(M. Watson)
(L. Harris)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Cynthia Bazinet
William Clute
Steven Hammond
Lance Harris
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Norman Plourde
Robert Remillard
Erik Scheinfeldt
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Colleen Cipro
Deidre Kosky
Robert Pelczarski

Motion passed 15-0-3.

Motion: To adjourn the executive session, to return to public session.

(M. Watson)

(J. Mason)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
Cynthia Bazinet
William Clute
Steven Hammond
Lance Harris
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Deidre Kosky
Sarah LaMountain
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski

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Norman Plourde

Robert Remillard

Erik Scheinfeldt

Michelle Sciabarrasi

Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

Motion passed unanimously.

The executive session adjourned at 7:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

TGP:rlp