

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1222 Monday, August 20, 2012

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Duncan Leith, Chair	Kenneth Mills
Colleen Cipro, Vice-chair	Robert Pelczarski
Cynthia Bazinet	Norman Plourde
William Clute	Erik Scheinfeldt
Steven Hammond (7:05 PM)	Michelle Sciabarrasi
Stacey Jackson	Athas Tsongalis
Julianne Kelley	Margaret Watson
James Mason	

Committee Members Absent:

Lance Harris	Sarah LaMountain
Robert Imber	Robert Remillard
Deidre Kosky	

Administration Present:

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools
Kelley Gangi, Director of Curriculum
Darryll McCall, Director of Operations
Susan Sullivan, Director of Human Resources
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

Student Representatives Present:

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

Chair Leith called the regular meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:00 PM.
Chair Leith read aloud the Guidelines for Public Hearing.

I. Public Hearing

Richard McWaters, Holden, addressed the School Committee.

7:05 PM Member Hammond joined the meeting.

Louis Cornacchioli, Rutland, addressed the School Committee.

Robin Tasca, Paxton, addressed the School Committee.

Maureen Floryan, Holden, read prepared statement (attachment 2).

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on June 27, 2012

Motion: To approve the minutes of the special meeting of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on June 27, 2012.

(M. Watson)

(S. Hammond)

The minutes of the special meeting of the School Committee held June 27, 2012 were approved, by consensus, with Members Cipro, Mills, Pelczarski, and Tsongalis abstaining.

- B. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on July 23, 2012

Approval deferred until reviewed in executive session.

- C. Approval of 1221st Regular Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on July 23, 2012

Approval deferred until reviewed in executive session.

- D. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on August 6, 2012

Member Watson pointed out the several times Member Scheinfeldt's named was misspelled in the draft minutes.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the special meeting of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on August 6, 2012, as corrected.

(R. Pelczarski)

(K. Mills)

The minutes of the special meeting of the School Committee held August 6, 2012 were approved, by consensus, with Members Clute and Tsongalis abstaining.

- E. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on August 6, 2012

Approval deferred until reviewed in executive session.

F. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on August 9, 2012

Member Watson asked that the minutes be corrected to include the following statement: *For the record, Member Watson spoke to the reduction of the Media Specialist – WRHS, strongly suggesting that that vacancy at the high school be temporary, firmly stating that having the high school Media Center staffed by a Media Specialist/MLS is very important for accreditation purposes.*

Member Watson pointed out several times Member Scheinfeldt's name was misspelled in the draft minutes.

Member Jackson asked that on page two of the draft minutes, the list of reductions under consideration be expanded, referencing attachment 5 (*FY13 Personnel Reductions*) and noting all possible reductions listed on that spreadsheet.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the special meeting of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on August 9, 2012, as corrected.

(N. Plourde)
(S. Hammond)

The minutes of the special meeting of the School Committee held August 9, 2012 were approved, by consensus, with Members Bazinet, Clute and Tsongalis abstaining.

G. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on August 9, 2012

Motion: To approve the minutes of the executive session of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on August 9, 2012, not to be released.

(M. Sciabarrasi)
(M. Watson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski

Norman Plourde
Erik Scheinfeldt
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

Abstained:
Cynthia Bazinet
William Clute
Athas Tsongalis

Motion passed 12-0-3.

III. Treasurer's Report/Financial Statements

Chair Leith reminded the Committee that 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

At Chair Leith's request, Mountview School Building Committee School Committee Representative Watson introduced Michael Pagano of Lamoureux Pagano Associates and David White, Vice-chair of the Mountview Building Committee. Mr. White addressed the School Committee, and showed a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Mountview Middle School Building Project and the Feasibility Study* (attachment 3). At the conclusion of the presentation, School Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions about the Mountview project. Chair Leith allowed two members of the audience (Mr. McWaters and Mr. Hilton) to ask questions of Mr. White. Following the question and answer session, Chair Leith thanked Mr. White and Mr. Pagano for addressing the Committee.

Chair Leith spoke about the Opening Meeting Law complaint that had been filed by Member Bazinet and reminded members of the deadline to provide copies of referenced emails. Copies of these emails should be provided to Chair Leith. Chair Leith took a moment to express his opinion that it is very discouraging to hear what is being said about the District in light of the recent financial issues. Chair Leith acknowledged that gross mistakes were made and it is the intent of the School Committee and District administration to get to the bottom of the matter, but he is hoping this district can move forward.

Chair Leith reported on his August 20, 2012 telephone call with Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson of DESE. Chair Leith reported that Mr. Wulfson stated the School Committee should get, and is entitled to, clear and accurate financial reports, and if that is not the case, or if any members have questions about the information they are provided, they should ask questions and their questions should be answered. Chair Leith was assured by Mr. Wulfson that the state is not planning to come into the District, at least at this time. Superintendent Pandiscio took the opportunity to outline some recent activity:

- District administration developed a remediation plan, that received the blessing of the District's auditors
- A Holden resident filed a complaint with DESE
- Superintendent Pandiscio contacted DESE about the complaint, and to inform the state actions the District is planning to take to remediate the situation
- DESE contacted Chair Leith to schedule a telephone conversation (which took place August 20, 2012)
- The state confirmed that Wachusett Regional School District is moving in the right direction

Some discussion took place.

B. Student Representatives

Emily Lindberg reported that incoming seniors were able to purchase parking passes beginning on August 20th, freshman orientation/senior mentoring will take place August 24th, a new extracurricular opportunity (BPA (Business Professionals of America)) is being organized by Mrs. Jeffcoat, activity fees have been increased. Emily Tomczyk reported another new extracurricular opportunity being organized (High School Leadership Academy). Ms. Tomczyk voiced her concern that without an MLA being on staff in the high school Media Center the school may face accreditation issues.

C. Management Subcommittee (D. Leith, Chair, C. Cipro, Vice-chair, C. Bazinet, S. Hammond, R. Imber, N. Plourde, R. Remillard, M. Sciabarrasi, M. Watson)

Chair Leith reported the Management Subcommittee had met with the two Student Representatives, just before this School Committee meeting, to provide the students with orientation to their roles and to answer any questions they had. Chair Leith will schedule a meeting of this subcommittee in the near future.

D. Education Subcommittee (S. Hammond, Chair, C. Bazinet, L. Harris, R. Imber, K. Mills, R. Pelczarski, N. Plourde, M. Watson)

Subcommittee Chair Hammond reported on the August 15th meeting of the Education Subcommittee. The main topic at that meeting was the Mountview Middle School project and the proposed plan for a media center. Subcommittee Chair Hammond reported the Education Subcommittee had endorsed the proposed plan. The Mountview Building Committee will be notified of this endorsement. The next meeting of the Education Subcommittee has not yet been scheduled.

- E. Business/Finance Subcommittee (R. Remillard, Chair, E. Scheinfeldt, Vice-chair, W. Clute, L. Harris, J. Kelley, S. LaMountain, D. Leith, J. Mason, M. Sciabarrasi)

In Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Remillard's absence, Vice-chair Scheinfeldt reported this subcommittee will meet on August 22nd at 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the District Central Office.

1. WRSD Educational Foundation Trust

No report was made.

- F. Community Outreach Subcommittee (S. Jackson, Chair, M. Sciabarrasi, Vice-chair, L. Harris, J. Kelley, J. Mason, K. Mills, A. Tsongalis, M. Watson)

Community Outreach Chair Jackson reported on the August 1st meeting of this subcommittee. She explained that subcommittee members have agreed that meetings of the Community Outreach Subcommittee will be held throughout the District in school buildings, to give District parents, staff, and Member Town residents the opportunity to attend meetings in their communities. The next meeting of the Community Outreach Subcommittee will be Wednesday, September 5th, at 7:00 PM. The September meeting will be held at the Central Office, and subsequent meetings will be held in the communities.

Motion: That the full School Committee endorse the development of a School Committee blog, posting, newsletter.

(S. Jackson)
(J. Kelley)

Member Jackson spoke to this motion.

8:18 PM Member Kelley left the table.

When asked who would be the "authors" for this site, Member Jackson explained School Committee members would have the opportunity to contribute.

8:20 PM Member Kelley returned to the table.

The possibility of Open Meeting Law conflict(s) was raised. There was considerable discussion relating to the Open Meeting Law and what can and cannot be done by way of electronic communication. When asked by Member Bazinet, it was clarified that what is being proposed is a “bulletin board.” Discussion continued. Many at the table agreed that “guidelines” should be developed governing this proposed “bulletin board.” Member Watson suggested the Community Outreach Subcommittee develop guidelines for full School Committee consideration. Member Pelczarski made a friendly amendment adding “contingent upon guidelines approved by the full School Committee.” This friendly amendment was accepted by the maker and seconder of the motion.

The motion was re-read.

Motion: That the full School Committee endorse the development of a School Committee blog, posting, newsletter, contingent upon guidelines approved by the full School Committee.

(S. Jackson)

(J. Kelley)

Member Tsongalis voiced his opinion that the word “blog” = opinion, and he does not believe “blog” is the best word to use. Member Sciabarrasi offered a friendly amendment to substitute the words “bulletin board” for the term “blog.” This friendly amendment was accepted by the maker and seconder of the motion.

The motion was re-read.

Motion: That the full School Committee endorse the development of a School Committee bulletin board, posting, newsletter, contingent upon guidelines approved by the full School Committee.

(S. Jackson)

(J. Kelley)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
William Clute
Steven Hammond
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski

Erik Scheinfeldt
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Athas Tsongalis
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet
Norman Plourde

Motion passed 13-2.

G. Audit Advisory Board (J. Mason, R. Remillard)

Member Mason reported he had met with District auditors on August 20th, the first day representatives from Powers & Sullivan were at the District Central Office to begin the annual audit. Member Mason reported he expects the Audit Advisory Board will meet within weeks of the auditors completing their field work.

H. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

I. Building Committees

1. Mountview Building Committee (M. Watson)

Member Watson reported the schedule of meetings relating to the Mountview project to take place in the next several weeks. Member Watson reported there will be a Mountview building project booth at Holden Days, August 25th.

2. Green Repair School Building Committee (D. Leith)

Chair Leith reported work on these three projects is nearing completion.

J. School Council Reports:

Central Tree Middle School, Chocksett Middle School, Davis Hill Elementary School, Dawson Elementary School, Glenwood Elementary School, Houghton Elementary School, Mayo Elementary School, Mountview Middle School, Naquag Elementary School, Paxton Center School, Thomas Prince School, Wachusett Regional High School, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, Early Childhood Center

There were no School Council reports made.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

In answer to Member Watson's inquiry, Superintendent Pandiscio confirmed the next New England Association of Schools & Colleges' accreditation evaluation of the Wachusett Regional High School will be in 2014.

Member Mason asked Chair Leith the status of the report on the condition of buses used to transport Wachusett students. Chair Leith reiterated that the "new" buses that will be used to transport Wachusett students come September are "new" to this District, but are not "new" buses. Chair Leith is scheduled to visit the bus lot within the week to follow-up on this matter.

Member Jackson had questions about attachments 4, 5, 6 of the August 16, 2012 Superintendent's Report (attachment 4). Member Jackson noted that some of the figures on attachment 6 are different from some of the figures on attachment 5, and she asked Superintendent Pandiscio if he could explain the discrepancies.

8:50 PM Student Representatives Lindberg and Tomczyk left the meeting.

Superintendent Pandiscio apologized that he was not able to immediately provide an explanation about the discrepancies, but promised to look at the numbers more closely when in the office the following day, and to provide the Committee with an explanation. Discussion ensued. Superintendent Pandiscio noted for the record that at the start of the financial problems the District is now dealing with, in mid-July, he made a prediction to the School Committee that the Committee would lose faith in his ability to lead the District, and he believes his prediction has come true. More discussion took place. Member Kelley distributed copies of an August 20, 2012 email she received from Donald Gorton, Counsel, Bureau of Municipal Finance Law, Division of Local Services, Massachusetts Department of Revenue (attachment 5). Member Kelley read aloud Attorney Gorton's email. Member Kelley's opinion is that the School Committee cannot transfer any funds at this meeting. Superintendent Pandiscio spoke to Member Kelley's allegation, and then made the recommendation that the School Committee vote to approve line item transfers, and to investigate the Department of Revenue's opinion regarding fiscal year-end closing procedures if the Committee is uncomfortable with increasing the FY12 appropriation by \$177,645.42. Discussion continued.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

1. To increase the FY12 Appropriation by \$177,645.42, appropriating Princeton Transportation and FY12 Miscellaneous Income

Superintendent Pandiscio suggested the following language be a part of the motion to increase the FY12 Appropriation: upon the favorable resolution of

the question raised by Member Kelley, as outlined in the August 20, 2012 email from Donald Gorton, Counsel, Bureau of Municipal Finance Law, Massachusetts DOR, to Member Julianne Kelley.

Motion: To increase the FY12 Appropriation by \$177,645.42, appropriating Princeton Transportation and FY12 Miscellaneous Income, upon the favorable resolution of the question raised by Member Kelley, as outlined in the August 20, 2012 email from Donald Gorton, Counsel, Bureau of Municipal Finance Law, Massachusetts DOR, to Member Julianne Kelley.

(S. Hammond)

(C. Bazinet)

It was confirmed that a two-thirds vote (14 in favor) is needed to pass this motion.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Colleen Cipro
Cynthia Bazinet
William Clute
Steven Hammond
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Erik Scheinfeldt
Athas Tsongalis
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Duncan Leith
Julianne Kelley

Abstained:

Stacey Jackson
Michelle Sciabarrasi

Motion failed 11-2-2

2. To authorize the Accounting Department to transfer within the same major FY12 Appropriation categories surplus account balances to deficit account balances.

Motion: To authorize the Accounting Department to transfer within the same major FY12 Appropriation categories surplus account balances to deficit account balances.

(S. Hammond)

(M. Watson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
Cynthia Bazinet
William Clute
Steven Hammond
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Erik Scheinfeldt
Athas Tsongalis
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Julianne Kelley

Abstained:

Stacey Jackson
Michelle Sciabarrasi

Motion passed 12-1-2

3. To authorize the Accounting Department to transfer from surplus major FY12 Appropriation categories (Salaries and Stipends, Pupil Services, Other Operating Costs) to deficit Appropriation categories (Benefits & Insurance, Instructional Support, Operations & Maintenance, Special Education Tuitions, Transportation, Debt Service)

Motion: To authorize the Accounting Department to transfer from surplus major FY12 Appropriation categories (Salaries and Stipends, Pupil Services, Other Operating Costs) to deficit Appropriation categories (Benefits & Insurance, Instructional Support, Operations & Maintenance, Special Education Tuitions, Transportation, Debt Service).

(M. Watson)

(S. Hammond)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
Cynthia Bazinet
William Clute

Steven Hammond
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Erik Scheinfeldt
Athas Tsongalis
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Julianne Kelley

Abstained:

Stacey Jackson
Michelle Sciabarrasi

Motion passed 12-1-2

4. To approve the appropriation of School Building Authority funds in the amount of \$58,181. to the Town of Holden for reimbursement for the Mountview Middle School project

Motion: To approve the appropriation of School Building Authority funds in the amount of \$58,181. to the Town of Holden for reimbursement for the Mountview Middle School project.

(S. Hammond)

(C. Bazinet)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

Motion passed unanimously

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 Plourde read a prepared statement (attachment 6).

Motion: That Dr. Thomas Pandiscio be given a vote of confidence at this meeting leading to his staying in the Wachusett School District until at least the end of his present contract.

(N. Plourde)

(C. Bazinet)

Member Bazinet read a prepared statement (attachment 7).

Discussion ensued.

Motion: To conduct a disciplinary hearing for Dr. Thomas Pandiscio, at the next regular School Committee meeting on September 10, 2012.

(S. Jackson)

Motion was ruled out of order.

There was debate about the appropriateness of acting on the motion on the floor, in light of WRSDC By-Law language stipulating that "motions to be acted upon under New Business must be sent to the School Committee Chair, in writing with rationale appended, for placement on the next available regular School Committee agenda." Discussion and debate ensued.

Motion: To suspend WRSDC By-Laws at this meeting and to take action on the main motion on the floor.

(R. Pelczarski)

(A. Tsongalis)

Discussion took place, with note being made that the motion made by Members Plourde and Bazinet is a matter of major issue, that five members of the School Committee are absent from this meeting, therefore, would be absent from voting on this major issue, and whether or not suspending by-laws is even allowable under

Roberts Rules of Order. After lengthy discussion, a roll call vote on the motion by Members Pelczarski and Tsongalis was taken.

Motion: To suspend WRSDC By-Laws at this meeting and to take action on the main motion on the floor.

(R. Pelczarski)
(A. Tsongalis)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Athas Tsongalis
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

William Clute
Steven Hammond
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Erik Scheinfeldt
Michelle Sciabarrasi

Motion failed 7-8

The motion by Members Plourde and Bazinet will be included on the agenda for the September 10, 2012 School Committee meeting, for action at that meeting.

Member Watson respectfully requested that Mountview Middle School project updates be posted on the District website.

Member Mills asked the status of contacting MASBO regarding services they can provide for auditing purposes. Superintendent Pandiscio reported he had shared with the Business/Finance Subcommittee, at the July 30, 2012 meeting, an email and information he obtained from MASBO Executive Director John Crafton. A member of the Business/Finance Subcommittee was to make further contact with Mr. Crafton to gather additional information.

There was brief discussion about transporting District students between day care locations and schools.

Member Hammond voiced his concern about the distribution of materials during a meeting, particularly when there is no back up or supporting information provided

School Committee members to aid them as they prepare to discuss the information. Distribution of such materials at the start of a meeting would be somewhat better than distributing the materials at the start of a discussion, or while the discussion is going on. It was suggested that perhaps there could be a WRSDC By-Laws amendment addressing materials distribution.

Motion: To extend the School Committee meeting for twenty minutes, until 10:20 PM.

(J. Mason)
(M. Watson)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

The motion passed unanimously.

- IX. Executive Session for to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel

Motion: To enter executive session to approve executive session minutes and to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, to return to public session.

(N. Plourde)
(J. Mason)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
Cynthia Bazinet
William Clute

Steven Hammond
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Erik Scheinfeldt
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Athas Tsongalis
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned to executive session at 10:02 PM, to return to public session.

The School Committee returned to public session at 10:12 PM.

10:12 PM Member Bazinet left the meeting.

10:12 PM Member Kelley left the meeting.

Approval of 1221st Regular Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on July 23, 2012

Chair Leith reported the minutes of the July 23, 2012 regular meeting minutes were corrected and approved, in executive session, with the addition of the following language on page three of the DRAFT minutes: "Chair Leith reported the School Committee had voted in executive session to terminate Business Manager Peter Brennan for non-performance of duties and job abandonment, effective immediately, July 23, 2012."

Motion: To approve the 1221st regular meeting minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on July 23, 2012, as corrected.

(K. Mills)
(S. Jackson)

The minutes of the School Committee held July 23, 2012 were approved, by consensus, with Member Tsongalis abstaining.

X. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(S. Hammond)
(J. Mason)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro
William Clute
Steven Hammond
Stacey Jackson
James Mason
Kenneth Mills
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Erik Scheinfeldt
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Athas Tsongalis
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

TGP:rlp