

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Executive Session

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Margaret Watson, Chair	Robert Imber
John Nunnari, Vice-chair	Stacey Jackson
Cynthia Bazinet	Julianne Kelley
Robert Carter	Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro	Michael Pantos
William Clute	Michelle Sciabarrasi
Sherry Conrad	Joseph Sova
Kristine Goodwin (7:32 PM)	Kori Stuart
Steven Hammond	Dawn Torres-Gale

Committee Members Absent:

Robert Pelczarski	Norman Plourde
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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

Guests Present:

Robert Ferina, Educators Financial Resource
Mike Morgan, President-New England Region, Educators Financial Resource
Robert Gianchiglia, Vice President-New England Region, Educators Financial Resource

Chair Watson called the executive session of the School Committee to order at 7:06 PM. Chair Watson introduced Educators Financial Resource representatives Robert Ferina, Mike Morgan and Robert Gianchiglia, all of whom addressed the School Committee, giving their background. School Committee members were given a copy of a *Proposal for Budget Stabilization for Wachusett Regional School District*, which Mr. Morgan explained (attachment 1).

7:32 PM Member Goodwin joined the meeting.

Following Mr. Morgan's explanation of the *Proposal for Budget Stabilization for Wachusett Regional School District*, members were given the opportunity to ask questions, which many members did.

The Educators Financial Resource presentation ended at 7:46 PM and Messrs. Ferina, Morgan and Gianchiglia left the meeting.

Committee members and the Superintendent continued discussing the proposed early retirement incentive. Superintendent Pandiscio stressed that this proposal is a one year only offer, only members of the WREA (teachers) are eligible to take advantage of this offer, it is a “retirement incentive,” not a “retirement benefit.” Superintendent Pandiscio gave an overview of what he sees as the timeline:

- ❖ November 2009 – schedule a meeting with those who are eligible to take advantage of this offering to explain the specifics in detail
- ❖ Late November/early December 2009 – schedule meetings at the individual schools to answer any questions interested teachers may have
- ❖ Mid-January/early February – those interested are to make their decision and inform the District

The Superintendent explained that a target number of participants would be 50, out of the 111 who are eligible. When asked about insurance coverage, the Superintendent explained that physicals would be required, but all would be insured.

The Superintendent explained that savings realized from this early retirement incentive would have no impact on the current budget shortfall; these savings would be reflected in the FY11 budget. He further commented that if this proposal does not get support (56 teachers do not “sign up” to retire early) and does not go forward this year, he might consider making the same sort of offer next year, but teachers would have had more than a year to learn more about this proposal and to consider an early retirement.

8:18 PM Member Sova left the table.

Superintendent Pandiscio confirmed that no teacher would be obligated to retire in the event they submitted their notice of intention to retire, taking advantage of this early retirement incentive, but this incentive did not go through.

8:20 PM Member Sova returned to the table.

Discussion continued.

Motion: To approve the Budget Stabilization Program (early retirement incentive), as presented.

(C. Bazinet)

(S. Conrad)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter

Colleen Cipro
William Clute
Shirley Conrad
Kristine Goodwin
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Michael Pantos
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Joseph Sova
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

Kori Stuart

Abstained:

Duncan Leith

(The motion passed 16-1-1.)

Superintendent Pandiscio confirmed this program can be openly discussed and promoted.

8:28 PM Member Cipro left the table.

8:29 PM Member Leith recused himself and left the table.

Member Goodwin was told she could remain at the table as her family's health insurance is not provided by the District.

Superintendent Pandiscio called the Committee's attention to the handout entitled *Wachusett Regional School District Public Employee Committee Projected 5-Year Aggregate Cost Savings to GIC November 2009* (attachment 2).

8:31 PM Member Cipro returned to the table.

Superintendent Pandiscio explained the information on attachment 2 and told the Committee that the GIC gives the District a short window, needing an entire negotiated agreement by December 1st, if the District is going to join the GIC. Superintendent Pandiscio explained how the GIC works and what plans would be offered. He explained they offer good plans (i.e. Tufts, Harvard Pilgrim), but deductibles could be high, higher than the deductibles on the District's current insurance plans. The Superintendent pointed out that the spreadsheet is using a 90/10 premium split. The Superintendent does feel the GIC will be a hard sell, but he also feels that the WREA will work hard to push acceptance of this insurance plan.

Many members asked questions, which the Superintendent answered. Discussion continued.

When asked, the Superintendent confirmed that if the District does join the GIC, the obligation would be for three years.

Motion: To support GIC as an insurance option, as presented.

(S. Conrad)
(J. Sova)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Members were told that attachment #2 (GIC spreadsheet) should not be shared and is not for public review.

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

(S. Conrad)
(J. Sova)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Kristine Goodwin
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Michael Pantos
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Joseph Sova
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:
None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

The executive session adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

TGP:rlp