

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1176 Monday, January 25, 2010

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

Margaret Watson, Chair	Stacey Jackson
John Nunnari, Vice-chair	Julianne Kelley
Robert Carter	Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro	Michael Pantos
William Clute	Robert Pelczarski
Sherry Conrad (7:12 PM)	Norman Plourde
Kristine Goodwin	Michelle Sciabarrasi (7:57 PM)
Steven Hammond	Kori Stuart
Robert Imber	Dawn Torres-Gale

*Committee Members Absent:*

Cynthia Bazinet	Joseph Sova
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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:*

Leanne Becker	Greg Savageau
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*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 7:08 PM. She informed the Committee that the meeting is being taped this evening, but is not being played live.

I. Public Hearing

Chair Watson read aloud the Guidelines for Public Hearing.

Chris King, Holden, addressed the School Committee.

Lisa Call, Sterling, addressed the School Committee. Ms. Call explained she was addressing the Committee as a parent, not as a member of the Sterling Finance Committee.

7:12 PM Member Conrad joined the meeting.

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 1175<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRDSC held on January 11, 2010

Motion: To approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held January 11, 2010.

(D. Leith)

(R. Imber)

The minutes of the regular meeting of the School Committee held January 11, 2010 were approved, by consensus, with Members Cipro, Goodwin and Kelley abstaining.

- B. Approval of Minutes of the Executive Session of the Wachusett Regional District School Committee held on January 11, 2010

Motion: To approve the minutes of the executive session of the School Committee held January 11, 2010, to be released.

(J. Nunnari)

(S. Conrad)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Robert Carter  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Stacey Jackson  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*

None

*Abstentions:*

Colleen Cipro  
Kristine Goodwin  
Julianne Kelley

(The motion passed 14-0-3.)

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 introduced Paxton Center School Principal Bobbie French who addressed the School Committee highlighting many programs, events and activities taking place at PCS. At the conclusion of Ms. French's address, members were given the opportunity to ask questions of the principal. Ms. French was thanked for attending the meeting and was given a round of applause.

Chair Watson reminded members of the Annual School Committee Retreat on Saturday, February 6, 2010, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon in the Media Center at WRHS.

Chair Watson called the Committee's attention to attachment 13 of Superintendent Pandiscio's January 21<sup>st</sup> Report and spoke to the resolution the Holden Selectboard had presented at the recent Massachusetts Municipal Association Annual Meeting. Holden Selectboard Chair Ferguson gave Chair Watson a copy of the MMA Annual Business Meeting agenda booklet, which will be placed in the School Committee Reading File.

7:45 PM Member Carter left the table.

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

Both Student Representatives gave reports on what is happening at WRHS: one more day of exams, the swim team's ninth win, the upcoming Winter Carnival, Winter Spirit Week, the dedication of the Black Box Theater, next month's drama festival. A moment of silence is held each morning during morning announcements in honor of Rutland graduate Britney Gengel.

7:49 PM Member Carter returned to the table.

7:50 PM Principal French left the meeting.

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

Chair Watson reported the Management Subcommittee will meet Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, at 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the District Central Office.

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

In Subcommittee Chair Bazinet's absence, Vice-chair Hammond explained the amendment to Policy 3311.1, striking the paragraph referencing special education students.

1. Amended Policy – AP3311.1 **Policy Relating to Education Graduation Requirements** – first reading

Motion: To approve the first reading of Amended Policy – AP3311.1 **Policy Relating to Education Graduation Requirements** – waiving the reading.

(S. Hammond)

(R. Imber)

Vote:

*In favor:*

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

*Opposed:*

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Vice-chair Hammond called the Committee's attention to attachments 4 – 9 of the Superintendent's Report, Deputy Superintendent Locke's report on educating high achieving students. Although no action on the part of the School Committee is required, the Committee, following extensive review and discussion, accepted the recommendations listed on page 5 of Mr. Locke's report. Superintendent Pandiscio told the Committee Mr. Locke's report will be shared with building principals at the January 28, 2010 Cabinet meeting and he expects the principals will then share the report with their School Councils and parents.

7:57 PM Member Sciabarrasi joined the meeting.

Chair Watson explained differentiated curriculum/instruction and different learning styles. Student Representative Savageau commented that two Advanced Placement U. S. History classes are now being offered at the high school. He also reported there is an AP World History class offered for sophomores. Discussion of how the needs of gifted and talented students are being addressed continued, with much dialogue among and between Committee members.

8:20 PM Member Pantos left the table.

Member Cipro mentioned that in the past a summary of the results high school students' SAT scores, college enrollments, etc. had been provided to the Community Outreach Subcommittee and she found the information to be very telling.

8:22 PM Member Pantos returned to the table.

Member Imber suggested revisiting Mr. Locke's report in April, when schools are developing their School Improvement Plans. Superintendent Pandiscio opined that at least six months should be allotted to address Mr. Locke's report and to implement the recommendations contained therein.

Motion: To revisit differentiated instruction in six months to review input school councils have provided on addressing the needs of high achieving students.

(R. Imber)

(M. Pantos)

Member Conrad noted that six months from the end of January would be mid-summer, July. She made the friendly amendment, which was accepted by the maker and the seconder of the motion, that differentiated instruction be revisited by November 1, 2010.

Motion: To revisit differentiated instruction by November 1, 2010 to review input school councils have provided on addressing the needs of high achieving students.

(R. Imber)  
(M. Pantos)

Discussion continued before the Committee voted.

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Robert Carter  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Michael Pantos  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart

*Opposed:*

Colleen Cipro  
Kristine Goodwin  
Duncan Leith  
Robert Pelczarski  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Abstained:*

Norman Plourde

(The motion passed 12-5-1.)

When the question was asked what process is used to address the needs of the small percentage of students who need more than differentiated instruction, Chair Watson handed the gavel to Vice-chair Nunnari so she could address the School Committee, explaining that our society does not segregate students based on ability. Chair Watson retrieved the gavel when she concluded her explanation. Superintendent Pandiscio did add that principals and teachers have not shared with him that they encounter problems when addressing the needs of high achieving students.

The Education Subcommittee will meet next on Thursday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

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

Subcommittee Chair Leith reported that while no meeting has yet been posted, he is hoping to call a meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee for the end of February. He is hoping that Mr. Harold Lane, Mr. George Balko and/or Ms. Carol Sullivan will attend the late February meeting to give the B/F Subcommittee an update on the status of their recently established 501c3 Corporation.

8:58 PM Member Pelczarski left the table.

Subcommittee Chair Leith explained that as he understands it funds donated to this recently established 501c3 Corporation would be to enhance programs in all K-12 schools, not just the high school. Chair Watson further explained that conversations/discussions between the Business/Finance Subcommittee and Holden representatives will be exploratory in nature only.

9:00 PM Member Pelczarski returned to the table.

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

Subcommittee Chair Cipro reported the subcommittee had met this date, immediately before the regular School Committee meeting. The subcommittee will meet next on Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Subcommittee Chair Cipro read the following statement, which was supported by the full School Committee:

*On behalf of the Community Outreach Subcommittee and I am sure the entire School Committee, we would like to extend our heartfelt thoughts of strength and hope to Britney Gengel and her family. Britney is a graduate of WRSD system, she and her family are well-known and well-loved in the Town of Rutland. We would like to publicly acknowledge Britney's giving spirit and commitment to others within her community and beyond. We wish only for the best possible outcome for the Gengel family.*

At the direction of the Community Outreach Subcommittee, Chair Watson had addressed letters to the towns of Paxton, Princeton, Rutland and Sterling encouraging the Members Towns to meet with their School Committee representatives in preparation for the upcoming budget season. She reminded members that copies of her correspondence had been shared with School Committee members.

9:01 PM Student Representative Greg Savageau left the meeting.

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

AAB Chair Conrad reported the Audit Advisory Board has not met since the last School Committee meeting.

H. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

1. Ad Hoc Subcommittee for Supplemental Revenue FY11 (M. Sciabarrasi, J. Sova)

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Co-chair Sciabarrasi told that this subcommittee will meet on Wednesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the Central Office.

I. 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)

Kristine Goodwin – Mountview Middle School

Julianne Kelley – Glenwood Elementary School

Duncan Leith – Wachusett Regional High School

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Member Carter is of the opinion Director of Human Resources Sullivan having to compile lists of published newspaper articles must be a tedious task and an unnecessary chore and suggested Director Sullivan discontinue including this listing in her monthly reports.

Member Carter referenced Superintendent Pandiscio explanation contained in the Superintendent's most recent Report to the School Committee of why the Wachusett Regional School District schools do so well when compared to their cohorts, while spending so little, and Member Carter commented that he

believes the Superintendent's statement "*The most important factor that contributes to the success of our students is the quality and performance of our teachers.*" is rather simplistic. Discussion ensued, followed by the conclusion that it is not possible to really learn why a school/district does not do as well while spending more than Wachusett, which was the initial question.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

There were no recommendations requiring 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 Committee

VIII. New Business

Motion: When transportation funds, which had been cut by the state (9C cuts), are refunded to the District by the state, those funds will be returned to the Member Towns.

(M. Pantos)  
(J. Kelley)

Superintendent Pandiscio commented that it might be considered shortsighted to so quickly make a motion to return these funds to the Member Towns before the School Committee has the opportunity to meet at the Annual School Committee Retreat, posted for Saturday, February 6, 2010, at which time the Superintendent and administration will present FY11 budget information for School Committee review and consideration. Discussion continued

Motion: To table the motion on the floor to a date certain, February 6, 2010.

(K. Goodwin)  
(S. Conrad)

Chair Watson explained a simple majority is needed to pass the motion to table.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

John Nunnari  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond

Robert Imber  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Robert Pelczarski  
Norman Plourde  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Kori Stuart

*Opposed:*

Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
Michael Pantos  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Abstained:*

Margaret Watson

(The motion passed 13-4-1.)

Member Cipro asked that it be on record that while she is in favor of transportation funds being returned to the Member Towns, she did not see a problem with deferring a vote on the tabled motion until February 6, 2010.

On behalf of the Town of Sterling and the Sterling Finance Committee, Member Stuart requested copies of schools' needs-based budgets for FY11. Since it was not completely understood what documents Sterling is looking for, Chair Watson strongly encouraged representatives from Sterling, as well as from all Member Towns, to attend and participate in meetings of the Budget Advisory Task Force. The District's budget is reviewed and discussed at length and in depth at meetings of the BATF.

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(R. Imber)  
(C. Cipro)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond

Robert Imber  
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 regular meeting adjourned at 9:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

TGP:rlp