

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #287 Saturday, February 6, 2010

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	Robert Pelczarski
Colleen Cipro	Norman Plourde
William Clute (10:17 AM)	Michelle Sciabarrasi
Shirley Conrad (9:09 AM)	Joseph Sova
Kristine Goodwin	Kori Stuart
Steven Hammond	Dawn Torres-Gale
Robert Imber	

Committee Members Absent:

Michael Pantos

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

Chair Watson called the special meeting of the School Committee to order at 9:08 AM and then turned the meeting over to Superintendent Pandiscio. Members were provided a copy of the meeting agenda (attachment 1). Superintendent Pandiscio distributed copies of budget preparation materials (attachment 2).

9:09 AM Member Conrad joined the meeting.

The Superintendent asked for patience as he worked through the many attachments. The Superintendent reported the District is doing well, better than in the past, and he is hoping the School Committee and teachers are on board when looking at the big picture.

Superintendent Pandiscio distributed a sheet asking members to identify concerns residents may have voiced regarding the District's budget (attachment 3). He explained data gathered will be used to create factual responses to the concerns that members may use when interacting with Member Town residents. These sheets will be collected at the conclusion of the meeting.

Superintendent Pandiscio walked the Committee through the meeting agenda, speaking to each item. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions during the Superintendent's presentation, rather than waiting until he finished.

Members were asked to review School Committee Retreat attachment 6 which listed staffing cuts made in FY10. The Superintendent stated such cuts cannot be taken again in FY11. He did point out that of the 18 teacher reductions in FY10, five were taken due to enrollment and these reductions would have been made in any case. He told that there had been much discussion with principals about their thoughts on what could be cut in FY11. There was discussion of class size vs. cutting specials. Members asked questions regarding (1) voluntary incentive to offer in-District transfers to level out some enrollment bubbles; (2) principals' reasoning for keeping specials vs. class size; (3) the status of the retirement incentive.

10:17 AM Member Goodwin left the meeting.

10:17 AM Member Clute joined the meeting.

Discussion continued.

10:32 AM Member Conrad left the table.

10:34 AM Member Conrad returned to the table.

At 10:45 AM Chair Watson and Superintendent Pandiscio suggested the Committee take a ten minute break.

10:58 AM Member Pelczarski left the meeting.

10:59 AM Members returned to the table.

Superintendent Pandiscio called members' attention to School Committee Retreat attachment 14, "Expenditures Had WRSD Been Funded at Foundation with Chapter 70 Funds," and explained the information contained in the spreadsheet. He then asked members to reference School Committee Retreat attachments 18 – 15, which he would be reviewing in reverse order. The Superintendent reviewed each sheet thoroughly, line-by-line. He did note that budget scenarios, at this point, do not taken into account any retirements.

Chair Watson read aloud a motion tabled at the regular School Committee meeting on January 25, 2010: *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.*

Motion: To renew and put back on the table the motion made at the January 25, 2010 regular School Committee meeting, which read "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.”

(C. Cipro)
(R. Imber)

Chair Watson asked Superintendent Pandiscio to speak to this motion.

Superintendent Pandiscio explained that when the five Member Towns were made aware of the state cuts to transportation, the Member Towns found funds to correct what the towns saw as a transportation problem, which was in fact an education problem, since busses stayed on the roads even with the threat of transportation funding cuts. It is important to understand that funds that were to be cut were education dollars vs. transportation funds. Much discussion ensued on how these funds should be returned to the Member Towns (assessment reduction vs. refund to the towns). It was confirmed that the Member Towns have not yet paid this additional assessment. Several members gave input on how they thought their towns would want this matter handled.

12:07 PM Member Cipro left the table.

Questions and answers continued.

12:08 Member Cipro returned to the table.

Discussion of the best method to compensate the towns/implement the motion on the floor continued.

Motion: To move the question.

(D. Torres-Gale)
(J. Nunnari)

Chair Watson explained a two-thirds majority (12 affirmative votes) is needed to pass the motion to move the question.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
William Clute
Shirley Conrad
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
Norman Plourde
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Joseph Sova
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber

Abstained:

Margaret Watson

(The motion passed 13-3-1.)

Chair Watson re-read the main motion. She explained a simple majority is needed to pass the motion.

Vote:

In favor:

John Nunnari
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
William Clute
Steven Hammond
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Norman Plourde
Joseph Sova
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

Shirley Conrad
Robert Imber
Duncan Leith
Michelle Sciabarrasi

Abstained:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet

(The motion passed 11-4-2.)

It was again confirmed that the May 1st assessments have not yet been paid.

Motion: To remand to the Business/Finance Subcommittee the task of developing a proposal to best address the recent assessment to Member Towns to cover state 9C cuts.

(J. Sova)

(S. Hammond)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Leith informed the School Committee that the Business/Finance Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, February 23, 2010, at 6:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the Central Office.

Motion: To adjourn.

(R. Carter)

(S. Conrad)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
William Clute
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
Norman Plourde

Michelle Sciabarrasi
Joseph Sova
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:
None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

The meeting adjourned at 12:28 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

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

TGP:rlp