

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1174 Monday, December 14, 2009

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Margaret Watson, Chair	Stacey Jackson
John Nunnari	Duncan Leith
Cynthia Bazinet	Michael Pantos
Robert Carter	Robert Pelczarski
Colleen Cipro	Norman Plourde
Sherry Conrad	Michelle Sciabarrasi
Kristine Goodwin	Kori Stuart
Steven Hammond	Dawn Torres-Gale
Robert Imber	

Committee Members Absent:

William Clute	Joseph Sova
Julianne Kelley	

Administration Present:

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools
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
Katie Carlson	

Invited Guests:

Nancy Hasselmann, Supervisor of Food Services
Russell Therrien, High School Facility Manager
Brian Bullock, Holden Town Manager
John Chandler, Holden Fire Chief
George Sherrill, Holden Police Chief

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 7:05 PM. She explained that the meeting is being taped live.

I. Public Hearing

Julie Keefe, Rutland, read a prepared statement (attachment 2).

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of 1173rd Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRDSC held on November 23, 2009

Chair Watson noted that in the fourth paragraph on page 10 the word "congratulation" should be corrected to read "congratulated."

Motion: To approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held November 23, 2009, as corrected.

(R. Imber)
(S. Hammond)

The minutes of the regular meeting of the School Committee held November 23, 2009 were approved, by consensus, with Members Conrad, Pantos and Stuart abstaining.

B. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRDSC held on November 23, 2009

Chair Watson asked members to review the minutes and if no corrections of substance were noted, these minutes could be approved in public session. If substantive corrections are noted, the minutes would be approved in executive session.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the executive session held November 23, 2009, to be released.

C. Bazinet)
(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Kristine Goodwin
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde

Michelle Sciabarrasi
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:
None

Abstained:
Shirley Conrad
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Kori Stuart

(The motion passed 13-0-4)

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 welcomed Holden Town Manager Brian Bullock, who introduced Holden Police Chief George Sherrill and Holden Fire Chief John Chandler. Mr. Bullock spoke of the December 2008 ice storm and voiced the appreciation of the Town of Holden for the assistance given by three WRSD employees. Mr. Bullock introduced Wachusett Regional School District Food Service Supervisor Nancy Hasselmann, who was greeted by a round of applause. Mrs. Hasselmann was presented with a plaque and addressed the School Committee. Mr. Bullock then introduced Russ Therrien, High School Facilities Manager, who was also given a round of applause. Mr. Therrien was presented a plaque and addressed the School Committee. Mr. Bullock asked Superintendent Pandiscio to step to the podium and he presented the Superintendent with a plaque. Superintendent Pandiscio thanked the town officials for the recognitions and he was given a round of applause.

7:20 PM Mr. Bullock, Chief Chandler and Chief Sherrill left the meeting.

7:21 PM Mrs. Hasselmann and Mr. Therrien left the meeting.

Chair Watson told the Committee that she and the other Holden School Committee representatives will be meeting with the Holden Selectboard on Thursday, December 17th. Business Manager Brennan will also participate in this meeting.

Chair Watson told that on December 12th she attended a Massachusetts Association of School Committee meeting regarding the Education Reform Act.

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

Student Representative Leanne Becker told of the recent Drama Club production, which was enjoyed by many. Student Representative Katie Carlson gave a sports update, reporting that winter sports are now underway. She also noted that the National Honor Society induction ceremony is planned for Monday, January 11th, at 7:30 PM. Student Representative Greg Savageau told of the annual NHS-sponsored blood drive scheduled for Friday, December 18th. He extended an invitation to the School Committee to attend WRHS holiday concerts which will be presented the evenings of December 16th and 17th. Mr. Savageau also reported that there are food and clothing drives underway at the high school.

Chair Watson noted that WRHS football coach Mike Dubzinski was recognized by "Patriots All Access" for the Mountaineers' undefeated season.

Both Student Representative Carlson and Member Leith acknowledged that high school sports teams were very successful this year, proved by the fact that about a dozen Wachusett athletes were honored as Worcester Telegram & Gazette all stars.

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 on the November 30th meeting of the Management Subcommittee. The subcommittee is reviewing two policies and will meet next on February 1st.

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

Subcommittee Chair Bazinet reported on the December 7th meeting of the Education Subcommittee. Topics discussed at that meeting were the proposed reconfiguration of the Rutland elementary schools, the policy which deals with graduation requirements, and the status of local gifted and talented programs. The next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

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

The Business/Finance Subcommittee has conducted the annual evaluation of the District Treasurer. Subcommittee Chair Leith read the evaluation narrative into the record (attachment 3).

Motion: To recommend to the School Committee that the contract with James Dunbar as Treasurer be extended for a period of one year; that no increase in compensation be granted; and that the performance of the Treasurer be determined to be satisfactory.

(D. Leith)

(M. Pantos)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Kristine Goodwin
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

7:37 PM Student Representative Savageau left the meeting.

Member Carter inquired about the towns making more frequent payments to the District. Subcommittee Chair Leith thought this topic could be casually mentioned at the December 17th meeting with the Holden Selectboard.

7:40 PM Member Goodwin left the table.

Subcommittee Chair Leith explained to the full Committee the purpose of a charitable trust and it is the opinion of the Business/Finance Subcommittee that the formation of such a trust be moved forward.

Motion: To recommend to the School Committee that the motion by vote of the March 14, 2005 School Committee, as amended, be re-affirmed to establish a Charitable Trust, as presented by District Counsel Leo McCabe.

(D. Leith)
(S. Conrad)

7:43 PM Member Goodwin returned to the table.

The motion was discussed. Chair Watson will contact Attorney McCabe upon his return to the office on December 18th. The composition of the Charitable Trust would be one trustee from each Member Town and two School Committee members. With an affirmative vote from the School Committee, Chair Watson will move forward with getting the Trust set up.

7:50 PM Student Representative Carlson left the meeting.

It was explained that the Charitable Trust would be separate from the mission of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee for Supplemental Revenue FY11. Business/Finance Chair Leith re-read the motion.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Kristine Goodwin
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

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

The Community Outreach Subcommittee has not met since the last School Committee meeting.

1. Amended Policy – AP8150 **Policy Relating to Communication/Public Relations Complaints from the Community** – second reading

Motion: To approve the second reading of AP8150 **Policy Relating to Communication/Public Relations Complaints from the Community**, waiving the reading.

(C. Cipro)

(D. Torres-Gale)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Kristine Goodwin
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

The Community Outreach Subcommittee will meet next on Tuesday, December 15th, at 6:30 PM.

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

Audit Advisory Board Chair Conrad reported on the December 10th meeting of the AAB and said that this Board probably will not meet again until sometime in March.

- H. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

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

Co-chair Sciabarrasi reported on the December 7th meeting of this subcommittee. She explained that a letter will be sent home to parents, via backpack with students grades K – 8 and will be posted on the high school website for high school parents. This letter will give parents the opportunity to make a tax deductible donation before the end of the year. It is expected that a second appeal letter will also be prepared and distributed sometime after the new year. The next meeting of this ad hoc subcommittee is posted for Wednesday, February 3, 2010.

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)

Kori Stuart extended thanks to those who supported Houghton Elementary School's recent fundraiser – the presentation of *A Christmas Carol*.

Stacey Jackson reported that applications for the ECC integrated program are available and announced an open house at the Early Childhood Center scheduled for January 5, 2010.

Duncan Leith – WRHS: The high school SIMCO is looking at the Mountaineer mascot and high school art teachers and students are addressing this issue. No School Committee involvement is warranted. Member Leith also reported that the matter of student smoking in restrooms at the high school was discussed at the Business/Finance Subcommittee meeting. Following that discussion, Member Leith raised this topic at the high school SIMCO meeting. It is generally agreed that monitoring of smoking is very difficult. Student Representative Becker commented, giving perspective from a student's point of view. Superintendent Pandiscio told the Committee that he has walked the corridors at the high school, hitting the known high school smoking "hot spots," and during his walkthrough did not encounter evidence of student smoking. He explained that installation of electronic monitoring devices in restrooms could be expensive.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

At the request of Member Carter, the Superintendent reported on his December 8th meeting with the West Boylston Regional Task Force, which Member Plourde also attended. Member Plourde read a prepared statement (attachment 4).

Motion: That the School Committee Chair refer the West Boylston Regional Task Force issue to the Education Subcommittee for preliminary discussions.
(N. Plourde)
(J. Nunnari)

Discussion ensued. It was explained to the Committee that West Boylston is exploring options at this time. Member Hammond suggested that any action on the part of the School Committee wait until it is determined if West Boylston is interested in pursuing joining the Wachusett Regional School District. Waiting until West Boylston makes the next move would be fine with Member Plourde, the maker of the motion. Member Imber made a friendly amendment, which was accepted by both the maker and the seconder of the motion, that action by Wachusett be conditional upon West Boylston contacting Wachusett to pursue talks.

Motion: That upon contact by the West Boylston Regional Task Force expressing interest in pursuing discussions to join the Wachusett Regional School District, the School Committee Chair refer the West Boylston Regional Task Force issue to the Education Subcommittee for preliminary discussions.

(N. Plourde)
(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Kristine Goodwin
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Kori Stuart

Opposed:

Dawn Torres-Gale

Abstained:

Margaret Watson

(The motion passed 15-1-1.)

Member Stuart had questions about budget figures contained in Business Manager Brennan's report. Superintendent Pandiscio explained how the Business Office keeps track of budgetary numbers for Buildings & Grounds and special education tuitions. Superintendent Pandiscio noted that this is the tightest budget managed in the last several years. Member Imber thanked the Superintendent for pursuing wind power in the District.

Superintendent Pandiscio gave the history of how the Rutland elementary school boundaries were developed when Glenwood Elementary School was being opened. He spoke of the enrollment differences now being experienced between the two elementary schools in Rutland and the need to level out these differences. A task force, which included Rutland parents and the principals of the two Rutland elementary schools, facilitated by Director of Operations McCall, was named and has met several times this year. A parent meeting will be held Wednesday evening, January 6th, at 7:00 PM at Glenwood Elementary School to give parents and the community the opportunity to learn about and ask questions about the proposed Rutland reconfiguration. Discussion of this matter continued, with questions being asked and answered.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

1. To approve the sale by the District of a \$11,100,000 RAN (Revenue Anticipation Note) to Beneficial Bank with a coupon rate of interest of 1.5%, dated December 17, 2009 and payable June 30, 2010, at par and accrued interest plus a premium \$55,389.

Members were provided a copy of Treasurer Dunbar's memorandum dated December 14, 2009 – Second Revenue Anticipation Note FY10 – Revision (attachment 5).

Motion: To approve the sale of a \$11,100,000 1.50 percent General Obligation Revenue Anticipation Note (the Note) of the District dated December 17, 2009 and payable June 30, 2010, to First Southwest Company at par and accrued interest plus a premium \$42,703.92.

Further, that the consent to the financial advisor, First Southwest Company, bidding for the Note, as executed by the District Treasurer prior to the bidding for the Note, is hereby confirmed.

Further, that in connection with the sale of the Note, the preparation of a Preliminary Official Statement dated December 4, 2009, and a final Official Statement dated December 10, 2009, each in such form as may be approved by the District Treasurer, be and hereby are ratified, confirmed, approved and adopted.

Further, that the District Treasurer and the Chairman of the Regional District School Committee be, and hereby are, authorized to execute and deliver a material events disclosure undertaking in compliance with SEC Rule 15c2-12 in such form as may be approved by bond counsel to the District, which undertaking shall be incorporated by reference in the Note for the benefit of the holders of the Note from time to time.

Further, that the Chairman of the Regional District School Committee, the District Secretary and the District Treasurer be and hereby are, authorized to take any and all such actions, execute and deliver such certificates, receipts or other documents as may be determined by them, or any of them, to be necessary or convenient to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing votes.

(S. Conrad)
(D. Leith)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Kristine Goodwin
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

2. To approve the School Calendar for School Year 2010-2011

Motion: To approve the School Calendar for School Year 2010-2011, as presented.

(S. Hammond)
(J. Nunnari)

There was much discussion of the eight half days scheduled for professional development during school year 2010-2011. The benefits of providing professional development for teachers was discussed and debated at length.

Motion: To move the question.

(C. Bazinet)
(S. Conrad)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

Robert Carter
Kristine Goodwin
Michael Pantos
Kori Stuart

(The motion passed 13-4)

Vote on main motion:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Kristine Goodwin

Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Norman Plourde
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski

(The motion passed 15-2)

3. To approve travel reimbursement for Member Carter's attendance at MASC/MASS Joint Conference, November 2009 (attachment 6)

Motion: To approve travel reimbursement for Member Carter's attendance at MASC/MASS Joint Conference, November 2009

(J. Nunnari)

(D. Leith)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Kristine Goodwin
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

VI. Public Hearing

No members of the public wished to address the School Committee.

VII. Unfinished Business

Member Carter asked the status of the request for information as to why the Wachusett district achieves such good academic results when the District's cost per pupil is lower than most. The Superintendent was puzzled by this question, as he could not recall being directed to prepare such a report, but will do so and will provide the information to the Committee in the near future. Member Carter also spoke of an article in the newspaper reporting that parents had sued a school district because of the amount of homework assigned.

9:50 PM Member Goodwin left the table.

VIII. New Business

Member Carter reported on his attendance at the MASC/MASS Annual Joint Conference held in November.

9:52 PM Member Goodwin returned to the table.

9:53 PM Member Goodwin left the table.

Member Carter has copies of materials he gathered at the Joint Conference if members would like to review. These materials will be placed in the Reading File.

Motion: To extend the meeting for 15 minutes.

(M. Pantos)
(S. Hammond)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski

Norman Plourde
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:
None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Member Torres-Gale spoke of her impression that the public views members of the School Committee as “sitting on a pedestal.”

10:03 PM Member Pelczarski left the table.

10:04 PM Member Plourde left the meeting.

Member Torres-Gale asked if, outside of budget season and outside of and aside from contract negotiations, there could be a place on the School Committee agenda for employee participation.

Motion: To propose amending the School Committee agenda to have official time set aside to give employee representative(s) a time to report to and/or address the School Committee.

(D. Torres-Gale)
(K. Stuart)

10:07 PM Member Pelczarski returned to the table.

Discussion of the motion on the table ensued.

10:10 PM Member Goodwin returned to the table.

Vote:
In favor:
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith

Robert Pelczarski
Michelle Sciabarrasi

Abstained:

Margaret Watson
Kristine Goodwin
Michael Pantos

(The motion failed 2-11-3)

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(D. Leith)
(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Kristine Goodwin
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Michelle Sciabarrasi
Kori Stuart
Dawn Torres-Gale

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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