

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #277, Saturday, February 10, 2007

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Margaret Watson, Chair	Steven Hammond
Kathleen Sweeney, Vice-chair (8:20 AM)	Mark James
Thomas Ackerman	Judith Newton
Cynthia Bazinet	John Nunnari
Robert Carter	Norman Plourde
Shirley Conrad	Michael Sherman
Melinda Coyle (8:45 AM)	Joseph Sova

Committee Members Absent:

Cynthia Ahearn	Kelly Maxwell
David Gibbs	Edward Pescaro
Robert Imber	Tammy Tod

Administration Present:

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools
Peter Brennan, Business Manager
Jack Locke, Director of Operations
Jason Newton, Director of Student/Information Services
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

Members of the School Committee gathered at 8:00 AM to tour the high school facility. The tour concluded at 9:05, at which time the members assembled in the Media Center. Chair Watson called the special meeting of the School Committee to order at 9:10 AM.

Superintendent Thomas Pandiscio gave the School Committee an overview of the budget process, reviewing a hard copy of PowerPoint slides and various handouts (attachments 1 – 7). It was the general consensus that all members of the School Committee need to be in agreement with the Superintendent and in support of the budget when discussing and promoting the FY08 budget.

9:55 AM Member Sweeney left the table.

9:56 AM Member Sweeney returned to the table.

10:10 AM Member Sweeney left the table.

10:14 AM Member Carter left the table.

10:18 AM Member Carter returned to the table.

10:19 AM Member Sweeney returned to the table.

10:20 AM Member Sherman left the table.

10:22 AM Member Sherman returned to the table.

10:32 AM Member Sweeney left the table.

10:38 AM Member Sweeney returned to the table.

11:03 AM Member Carter left the table.

11:06 AM Member Carter returned to the table.

The Superintendent asked School Committee members for their thoughts and input on what they envision in the future for this District:

- Equitable middle school athletic programs (Ackerman)
- School Committee members need to start promoting the positive attributes of the District (Ackerman and Carter)
- Professional development (Sherman)
- Department Heads at the high school (Sherman)
- Establishment of a “good neighbor/good citizen/good leader” = service learning program for District students (Bazinet)
- Student involvement to help pass the budget (Bazinet)
- Moving the District forward (after two years of restoration budgets); want to get better all the time/pursue vision (James)
- Add to print collection (Watson)
- Encourage teachers and staff to think creatively when thinking about print collections (Watson)
- Greater interest in ideas for professional development (Watson)
- Addressing the various needs of the various students in classrooms. How do we address differentiated curriculum? By the use of classroom aides? (Sweeney)
- Rethink budget presentation (Sweeney)
- Illustrate for the public ways in which the District has changed/saved during the past few budget seasons (Sweeney)
- Outside the budget season(s), communicate to the community how “great things are” in the District. Try to counter the “sour taste in the mouths” of the public (especially Holden) towards the District. (Hammond)
- Understand school choice deficit (more students are leaving the District than choosing in). (Carter)
- Market pluses offered by the District (music programs, arts, etc.) (Carter)
- How will this budget and strategic plan come into line? (Carter)

- Full day kindergarten (Carter)
- This is a budget that will need to be sold to the Towns; therefore, the District needs to show the towns' people where cuts have been made. (Newton)
- High school seniors should be attending town meetings and making their presence known (Newton)
- Per senior citizens in Holden, the opinion is that students are disconnected from the community/students have "too much" (computers, technology, etc.). (Newton)
- Foreign language development – offer foreign language at the elementary level (Newton)
- Professional development (Conrad)
- Elementary building principals should make visits to other communities (such as Newton) to see how those schools instruct, using less technology (Conrad)
- Aides in the classrooms (Conrad)
- Aides in buildings that are running out of additional classroom space (Bazinet)
- Choice comparison (where are students going, where are they coming in from) (Coyle)
- In support of half day kindergarten (Coyle)
- Gather statistics on WRHS graduates' success at college (Coyle)
- Start teaching foreign language at the early elementary level, if possible (Coyle)
- Should athletic opportunities for middle school age students be the towns' responsibility? (Coyle)
- School Committee members and the District should attempt to clarify, whenever possible, any misconceptions that are out there about the District budget (which Chair Watson has heard about at Regional Selectboard meetings she's attended). (Watson)
- Stress that the District is under very efficient cost management (Sherman)
- Showing the District's savings is important (Sweeney)
- Develop a bulleted listing showing ways the District has made savings (in-District travel, installation of phone system, Energy Education, etc.). (Sherman)
- When School Committee members speak at Town Meetings, all should share the same message. (Perhaps this is a Community Outreach Subcommittee duty.) (Newton)

Motion: To adjourn

(R. Carter)
(J. Nunnari)

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

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