

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1128, Monday, April 23, 2007

Cafeteria

Davis Hill Elementary School

*Committee Members Present:*

Margaret Watson, Chair	Robert Imber
Kathleen Sweeney, Vice-chair	Mark James
Cynthia Ahearn	Kelly Maxwell
Cynthia Bazinet	Judith Newton
Robert Carter	John Nunnari
Shirley Conrad	Norman Plourde
Melinda Coyle	Michael Sherman
Steven Hammond	Tammy Tod

*Committee Members Absent:*

Thomas Ackerman	Joseph Sova
David Gibbs	

*Administration Present:*

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools  
Jack Locke, Director of Operations  
Peter Brennan, Business Manager  
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

*Student Representatives Present:*

Alexandra O'Connor

*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 7:07 PM.

I. Public Hearing

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

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of the 1127<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on April 9, 2007

The minutes of the regular meeting held April 9, 2007 were approved by consensus, with Members Conrad, Coyle, Maxwell and Tod abstaining.

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 reminded members of the Stand for Children rally to be held in Boston on April 25, 2007, letting the Committee know a bus will be leaving from the Holden pool parking lot at 9:00 AM that morning. Chair Watson also reminded the Committee of the May 1, 2007 MASC Day on the Hill rally in Boston and asked members who are interested in attending to speak to her.

Chair Watson asked members to hold aside Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, in the event a special School Committee needs to be scheduled if all business on the agenda of the evening's meeting is not concluded.

B. Student Advisory Committee (Nathaniel Flynn, Alexandra O'Connor)

Ms. O'Connor reported to the School Committee a moment of silence had been observed at the high school on April 23<sup>rd</sup> in memory of victims of two recent tragedies, a vehicle accident in Leicester and a shooting at Virginia Tech University. Lexie also reported that report cards were issued on April 23<sup>rd</sup> as well as a notice about the use of breathalyzers at upcoming high school social functions. She concluded her report with an update on recent sport teams' achievements. Chair Watson thanked Lexie

for representing the Student Advisory Committee, along with Nathaniel Flynn, and this was followed by a round of applause.

7:20 PM Student Representative Alexandra O'Connor left the meeting.

C. Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Chair Watson reported the next meeting of the Steering Committee will be April 26, 2007.

D. Management Subcommittee (M. Watson, Chair, T. Ackerman, Vice-chair, C. Ahearn, C. Bazinet, R. Carter, S. Conrad, R. Imber, M. Sherman)

Chair Watson explained to the Committee that a second reading is required on six policies, further explaining the amendments are housekeeping in nature. Chair Watson waived reading the policies, but did make note of the amended language in the six policies. She asked the Committee to approve the second reading as a lot rather than individually, unless there are any problems with the proposed amendments.

Motion: To approve the second reading of Amended Policy AP1111 **Policy Relating to School Committee Operation School Committee Member Authority**, Amended Policy AP1311 **Policy Relating to School Committee Operation Committee-Superintendent Relationship**, Amended Policy AP5240 **Policy Relating to Personnel Management Fraud Prevention Policy**, Amended Policy AP5281.7 **Policy Relating to Personnel Management Leaving the Building During the School Day**, Amended Policy AP5281.8 **Policy Relating to Personnel Management Small Necessities Leave**, Amended Policy AP5290.1 **Policy Relating to Personnel Management Superintendent and Executive Staff Vacation Policy**.

(M. James)

(M. Coyle)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad

Melinda Coyle  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

- E. Education Subcommittee (C. Bazinet, Chair, Steven Hammond, Vice-chair, C. Ahearn, J. Nunnari, N. Plourde, K. Sweeney)

Subcommittee Chair Bazinet reported that the Education Subcommittee has concluded its work for this year.

- F. Business/Finance Subcommittee (M. Sherman, Chair, S. Conrad, Vice-chair, T. Ackerman, M. Coyle, M. James, J. Newton, J. Sova)

Subcommittee Chair Sherman reported to the Committee that the Business/Finance Subcommittee had met on April 10<sup>th</sup> to review that subcommittee's portion of the Superintendent's evaluation and, following that meeting, the subcommittee met with the Budget Advisory Task Force. The Business/Finance Subcommittee will meet April 24, 2007 to discuss the evaluation of the Business Manager and to respond to a request for information.

- G. Community Outreach Subcommittee (K. Sweeney, Chair, E. Pescaro, Vice-chair, M. Coyle, J. Newton, N. Plourde))

The Community Outreach Subcommittee last met on April 9<sup>th</sup> and, following policy review at that meeting, two policy amendments are being brought forward for the first reading. Subcommittee Chair Sweeney waived the reading of the policies, but did explain the amendments.

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

(K. Sweeney)  
(J. Nunnari)

There was considerable discussion of this policy and what approach a School Committee member is to take when residents of their towns approach them with a comment and/or complaint relating to the District. Following debate and discussion, a roll call vote was taken on the amended policy, as presented.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Kathleen Sweeney  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Mark James  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*

Robert Carter  
Melinda Coyle  
Robert Imber  
Kelly Maxwell  
Michael Sherman

*Abstained:*

Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 10-5-1)

Motion: To approve the first reading of Amended Policy  
AP8211 *Policy Relating to Communication/Public Relations*  
**Organization and Function of School Councils.**

(K. Sweeney)  
(M. Coyle)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Melinda Coyle  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

- H. Audit Advisory Board (Shirley Conrad, Chair, Judith Newton, Vice-chair, School Committee Representatives)

Audit Advisory Board Chair Conrad reported on the April 12<sup>th</sup> meeting and announced the next meeting will be Thursday, June 14, 2007 (changed from an originally scheduled date of June 7<sup>th</sup>). Upon inquiry by Audit Advisory Board Chair Conrad, Chair Watson explained the current Audit Advisory Board will serve until July 1, 2007.

- I. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

1. Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Regional Agreement (J. Nunnari, Chair, M. Coyle, S. Hammond, R. Imber, N. Plourde)

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Chair Nunnari reported that the charge of this newly named ad hoc subcommittee is being reviewed by Attorney McCabe. It is anticipated the first meeting of this subcommittee will be some time after the May 23, 2007 School Committee organizational meeting.

- J. Building Committees

1. High School – Kelly Maxwell

At the request of Member Maxwell, who was unable to attend the last Building Committee meeting, Superintendent Pandiscio reported on the high school project, sharing the good news that, following a recent rain storm, the Department of Conservation and Recreation ran tests and the turbidity tested within range. He further commented that during the same storm there was an erosion slide by the media center, which can be repaired. Progress is being made, but it is being made slowly.

2. Rutland – Elementary School – Edward Pescaro

Member Pescaro, who served as the Rutland Elementary School Building Committee representative, has resigned from the School Committee, leaving this position vacant. As the Glenwood Elementary School is open and running, and Principal Kelley Nosel is handling building matters as they arise, this appointment need not be filled.

- K. School Council Reports: Central Tree Middle School (T. Ackerman), Chocksett Middle School (S. Conrad), Davis Hill Elementary School (C. Bazinet), Dawson Elementary School (M. James), Glenwood Elementary School (E. Pescaro), Houghton Elementary School (N. Plourde), Mayo Elementary School (S. Hammond), Mountview Middle School (J. Newton), Naquag Elementary School (J. Nunnari), Paxton Center School (M. Coyle), Thomas Prince School (K. Sweeney), Wachusett Regional High School (M. Sherman/T. Tod), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (C. Ahearn)

Member Nunnari reported the Naquag School Council will meet on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Upon inquiry by Member Plourde, and according to policy, the Committee acknowledged the need to accept a donation made to the Science Seminar program at the high school.

Motion: To accept a donation in the amount of \$7,500. from the Estate of David Beckwith to the Wachusett Regional High School Science Seminar program.

(N. Plourde)

(S. Conrad)

Member Imber made a friendly amendment, which was accepted by the maker of the motion, that the School Committee acknowledge this gift by writing a thank you note to Laura Beckwith, Executrix of the Estate of David Beckwith.

Motion: To accept a donation in the amount of \$7,500. from the Estate of David Beckwith to the Wachusett Regional High School Science Seminar program and that this gift be acknowledged in writing by the School Committee.

(N. Plourde)

(S. Conrad)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Melinda Coyle  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member Newton referred to the six early release days being proposed for the 2007-2008 school calendar, asking how daily schedules will be handled. The Superintendent responded and



explained, in the absence of policy, building principals deal the matter of schedules, which are handled on a building-by-building basis. Chair Watson requested that further discussion of the proposed amended school calendar be deferred until the matter is acted upon later in this meeting.

Member Conrad referred to page 7 of the *Independent Auditors' Reports Pursuant to Governmental Auditing Standards and The Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996* (attachment 4 of the April 19, 2007 Superintendent's Report) regarding semi-annual certifications for employees whose salaries are fully paid with federal grant funds. Upon request, the administration confirmed that the District is currently in compliance with this recently enacted federal regulation.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

1. Approval of School Choice Participation

Chair Watson gave history of the District's participation in the school choice program, referring to a School Committee vote taken on May 29, 2003 opening school choice for students entering kindergarten to grade five (attachment 2). Discussion of school choice ensued.

Motion: That the Wachusett Regional School District extend School Choice for FY08, accepting students entering grades K – 11.

(M. James)

(C. Bazinet)

Discussion continued.

8:10 PM Member Conrad left the table.

8:11 PM Member Newton left the table.

8:13 PM Member Newton returned to the table.

8:14 PM Member Conrad returned to the table.

Member Imber made a friendly amendment to the motion adding "based on anticipated openings, not to exceed recommended class size limits." This friendly amendment was accepted by the makers of the motion.

Motion: To accept the friendly amendment.

(R. Imber)

(M. James)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Kathleen Sweeney

Cynthia Ahearn

Cynthia Bazinet

Robert Carter

Shirley Conrad

Melinda Coyle

Steven Hammond

Robert Imber

Mark James

Judith Newton

John Nunnari

Norman Plourde

Michael Sherman

Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*

Kelly Maxwell

*Abstained:*

Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 14-1-1)

Motion: That the Wachusett Regional School District extend School Choice for FY08, accepting students entering grades K – 11 based on anticipated openings, not to exceed recommended class size limits.

(M. James)

(C. Bazinet)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Kathleen Sweeney

Cynthia Ahearn

Cynthia Bazinet

Robert Carter

Shirley Conrad

Melinda Coyle

Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*

Kelly Maxwell

*Abstained:*

Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 14-1-1)

2. Adoption of a Revised *FY08 Appropriation*

The Superintendent distributed copies of the Proposed FY08 Appropriation and the FY08 Proposed Member Town Assessment (attachments 3 & 4) and spoke of and explained how the proposed appropriation numbers were derived at. All Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions, which the Superintendent answered. Following the question and answer period, Chair Watson explained to the Committee that a two-thirds vote (13 in favor) would be required to pass the motion.

Motion: To accept the *FY08 Proposed Appropriation* in the amount of \$68,564,310 and assessments to the Member Towns of \$44,697,365.

(M. Sherman)

(S. Conrad)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Mark James

Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*

Melinda Coyle  
Robert Imber  
Kathleen Sweeney

(Motion passed 13-3)

3. Acceptance of FY08 Proposed Special Appropriation

The Superintendent distributed a sheet and explained the FY08 Proposed Member Town Special Appropriation having to do with the reimbursement to the Town of Paxton for capital improvement in the amount of \$75,000 (attachment 5).

9:11 PM Member Carter left the table.

9:14 PM Member Carter returned to the table.

Motion: To accept the *FY08 Proposed Special Appropriation* in the amount of \$75,000 and assessments to the Member Towns of \$75,000 for the purpose of reimbursement to the Town of Paxton for capital improvement.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Melinda Coyle  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Kelly Maxwell

Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

9:17 PM Member Nunnari left the table.

4. Approval of the Amended School Calendar for School Year 2007-2008

9:18 PM Member Maxwell left the table.

9:19 PM Member Nunnari returned to the table.

9:20 PM Member Maxwell returned to the table.

The Superintendent explained the intent of the six early release days, to be used for staff development. The proposed amended calendar was reviewed and discussed.

Motion: To approve the amended School Calendar for school year 2007-2008.

(K. Maxwell)  
(M. Coyle)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Kathleen Sweeney  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Melinda Coyle  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari

Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*  
None

*Abstained:*  
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 15-0-1)

VI. Public Hearing

Tim Ethier, Holden, addressed the School Committee speaking of the late David Beckwith and the contributions he had made as a teacher at Wachusett Regional High School.

VII. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business brought before the Committee.

VIII. New Business

Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools

Chair Watson referred to attachment 7 of the April 19, 2007 Superintendent's Report (attachment 6). The summary document was reviewed and a few minor spelling errors were noted. Several members commended the Chair on the work she had done preparing the document. A question was asked about the procedure used to award the Superintendent a salary increase. Chair Watson explained that action will be based on the goals the Superintendent had set and will be acted upon in the fall. A member questioned if it would be possible to consolidate the process (spring evaluation plus review of accomplishment of goals). Chair Watson explained that would be difficult, as the retiring School Committee evaluates the Superintendent in the spring, prior to town elections and new School Committee membership. A member noted that only 50% of School Committee members submitted evaluation paperwork and/or participated in the evaluation process and suggested that a year from now the standing Chair more strongly remind and encourage member participation in this important activity.

Motion: To accept the Evaluation of the Superintendent Dr. Thomas G. Pandiscio for the year 2006-2007, as presented.

(R. Carter)  
(K. Maxwell)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*

None

*Present:*

Melinda Coyle

(Motion passed 15-0-1 recorded as present)

Chair Watson announced all business before this meeting of the School Committee had been concluded; therefore, a special meeting on April 30, 2007 will not be necessary.

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(M. Sherman)  
(R. Imber)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson

Kathleen Sweeney  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Melinda Coyle  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Tammy Tod

*Opposed:*  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

TGP:rlp