

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1094, Monday, June 6, 2005  
7:00 PM

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

Alice Livdahl, Chair	Mark James
Michael Sherman, Vice-chair	Mary Catherine Maher
Cynthia Ahearn	Kelly Maxwell
Cynthia Bazinet	Phillip Mighdoll
Elizabeth Brennan	Judith Newton
Charles Capparelli	John Nunnari
Robert Carter	Norman Plourde
Shirley Conrad	Kathleen Sweeney
David Gibbs (7:40 PM)	Margaret Watson

*Committee Members Absent:*

Cheryl Rauh

*Administration Present:*

Paul K. Soojian, Deputy Superintendent and Director of Operations  
Rebecca Petersen, Interim Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

*Others present, who desired to be recorded as present (see attached Attendance Sheet – attachment 1).*

Chair Livdahl called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and advised that District Counsel Leo McCabe would be in attendance. Chair Livdahl noted that until further notice, the School Committee meetings will be held in the Library at Central Tree Middle School in Rutland.

I. Public Hearing

David Lowenthal, Princeton, read a prepared statement (attachment 2)

Edwin Meyer, Holden, addressed the School Committee.

## II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of Organizational Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on May 25, 2005. Approved by consensus, correcting the date on page 3 to September 30, 2005.
- B. Approval of the 1093<sup>rd</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on May 25, 2005 – approved by consensus.
- C. Reconsideration of approval of the 260<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on May 3, 2005. The minutes had been approved, removing the second motion from attachment 1. Attachments to minutes cannot be altered; they must be approved as presented.

Motion: Amend approval of minutes of Special Meeting of the WRSD Committee held on May 3, 2005, having attachment 1 be a part of the minutes as presented at the May 3, 2005 meeting, noting that by concensus on May 3, 2005 the WRSD Committee had taken no action on motion #2 of attachment 1.

(M. Watson)

(K. Maxwell)

Vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

### III. Treasurer's Report/Financial Statements

Chair Livdahl reminded the Committee that if there were questions regarding the Comptroller'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 Livdahl extended congratulations to all District high school and middle school graduates.

Chair Livdahl thanked those who had acknowledged her election as Chair of the WRSD Committee.

Chair Livdahl thanked former Member John Kane for his service to the Committee and wished him well.

Chair Livdahl congratulated those who have recently been appointed to administrative and principal positions within the District and wished them all luck.

Chair Livdahl asked Members to advise if they find they are unable to attend School Council meetings or subcommittee meetings because of scheduling conflicts.

Chair Livdahl announced that Member Kelly Maxwell had been appointed to serve on the Wachusett Regional High School Building Committee as the School Committee representative (attachment 8).

Chair Livdahl explained her reasoning for changing the seating arrangement at the table and thanked Members for their understanding.

Chair Livdahl advised the Committee that she would strive to have meetings adjourn no later than 10:00 PM.

Chair Livdahl reminded Members that a Special School Committee meeting has been scheduled for Monday, June 27, 2005, in the library at Central Tree Middle School in Rutland since the Media Center at the high school will be under renovation.. Chair Livdahl encouraged Members to attend this meeting.

Chair Livdahl has discussed with the Superintendent his vacation plans for the remainder of the month of June, as well as his plans for vacation between July 1 and September 30.

- B. Student Advisory Committee (C. Brennan, K. Getchell, J. Leger, C. Wilde)

No one from the Student Advisory Committee was present.

- C. Management Subcommittee

Chair Livdahl reported that a Management Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 15, 2005, at 6:30 PM in the Curriculum Center, District Central Office. Following discussion, Chair Livdahl agreed to have the District hiring process, particularly as it relates to recent interim appointments, an item on the agenda for the Management Subcommittee meeting. Following inquiry, Attorney McCabe explained that the Management Subcommittee can review the hiring process, but would not have the authority to overturn any appointments.

- D. Education Subcommittee

Education Subcommittee Chair Margaret Watson reported that the Education Subcommittee has not met since the Organizational meeting.

- E. Business/Finance Subcommittee

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Michael Sherman reported that the Business/Finance Subcommittee met on Wednesday, June 1, 2005, and will meet again on Wednesday, June 8, 2005. Chair Sherman read a prepared statement (attachment 9). Suggestions and comments that Members wish to be shared with the independent

auditor in connection with the Fraud Risk Assessment are to be directed to Chair Livdahl and will become part of the public record. Member Judith Newton suggested an Audit Oversight Subcommittee be formed. Chair Sherman will investigate this suggestion.

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Sherman referred to an invitation received by Chair Livdahl from Holden Selectboard Chair Joseph Sullivan inviting Chair Livdahl, Vice-chair Sherman and Superintendent Tutela to attend a meeting with Member Town municipal representatives scheduled for Thursday, June 9, 2005, 7:00 PM in Holden's Memorial Hall for the purpose of discussing the FY06 budget (attachment 10). Deputy Superintendent Soojian distributed a posting, 6/6/05#2, on which this meeting had been included (attachment 11). Discussion continued.

Motion: To decline the invitation to participate in the open meeting scheduled to take place Thursday, June 9, 2005, at 7:00 PM in Holden's Memorial Hall for the purpose of discussing the FY06 budget.

(D. Gibbs)  
(M. James)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Charles Capparelli  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Phillip Mighdoll  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Alice Livdahl  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton  
Kathleen Sweeney

(Motion passed 10-8)

Further discussion occurred.

Motion: To direct the Community Outreach Committee to meet and invite representatives of the Member Towns to exchange information relevant to the FY06 budget.

(M. Sherman)

(M. James)

Roll Call Vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

F. Community Outreach Subcommittee

Chair Brennan advised that the Community Outreach Subcommittee will meet Monday, June 13, 2005, 6:30 PM in the Curriculum Center at the District Central Office.

G. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

1. Superintendent Search Committee (R. Carter, Chair, C. Ahearn, C. Bazinet, E. Brennan, A. Livdahl, K. Maxwell, P. Mighdoll, N. Plourde, K. Sweeney)

Chair Carter advised that the Superintendent Search Committee will meet Tuesday, June 21, 2005, 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the District Central Office.

#### H. Building Committees

1. High School
2. Rutland – Naquag/Central Tree

Member Elizabeth Brennan reported that the Rutland DPW will repair the sidewalks on the CTMS property when school is out for the summer.

3. Rutland – Elementary School – Elizabeth Brennan

Member Elizabeth Brennan reported that work crews will begin working 6 days a week/10 hours a day on this project. Groundbreaking is scheduled for Thursday, June 9, 2005, 4:30 PM at the Glenwood Road site.

Member David Gibbs reported that he had inquired of Sterling Executive Secretary Timothy Bragan the status of a final audit of the Houghton/Chocksett Schools building project. Executive Secretary Bragan explained an audit had never been requested. Attorney McCabe explained that building project audits are automatic by the State, but at this point the State is two to three years behind in such audits.

Motion: To request an audit of the Houghton/Chocksett School building project.

(D. Gibbs)  
(C. Capparelli)

#### Roll Call Vote:

In favor:

Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn

Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Alice Livdahl

Abstained:

Kelly Maxwell

(Motion passed 16-1-1)

- I. School Council Reports: Central Tree Middle School, Chocksett Middle School, Davis Hill Elementary School, Dawson Elementary School, Houghton Elementary School, Mayo Elementary School, Mountview Middle School, Naquag Elementary School, Paxton Center School, Thomas Prince School, and Wachusett Regional High School.
  
- V. Superintendent's Report
  - A. Discussion of Report

Following inquiry as to why it seems to be so difficult to fill the Special Education Administrator position, Deputy Superintendent Soojian explained that there is a the lack of qualified candidates, but is hopeful that, with the end of the school year approaching, more qualified candidates will apply for the position.

Member Phillip Mighdoll left meeting at 9:22 PM.

- B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee



Motion: To authorize the Wachusett Regional School District Treasurer, acting under the provisions of Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 16(g) as amended by Chapter 134 of the Acts of 1972, and with the approval of the Chairman of the District Committee, to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of revenue, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2005 and to issue a note or notes therefore, payable within one year, in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 44, Section 17.

(K. Maxwell)

(M. Sherman)

Roll Call Vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member Phillip Mighdoll returned to the meeting at 9:26 PM

It was agreed by concensus to accept 2005-2006 School Improvement Plans, as reviewed by School Committee Members on Friday, June 3, 2005.

Motion: Authorize the transfer of surplus balances in any appropriation categories to instructional support (regular education/special education) as part of the FY05 year-end close out.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

## VI. Public Hearing

Ralph Rondinone, Sterling, spoke as a Sterling resident, not as a member of the Wachusett Regional High School Building Committee. He extended thanks to Deputy Superintendent Paul Soojian and Director of Administrative Services Steven Penka for their service to the District and wished them well. During this time of transition, strong interim leadership is needed in the District. He has worked closely with WRHS Principal Thomas Pandiscio, who he believes can offer the type of leadership needed during this period.

## VII. Unfinished Business

Chair Alice Livdahl suggested that the Management Subcommittee address the three sets of missing Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee, meetings held on August 9, 2004, March 28, 2005, April 11, 2005.

- A. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on August 9, 2004
- B. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on March 28, 2005
- C. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on April 11, 2005

#### VIII. New Business

Wachusett Regional High School Principal Thomas Pandiscio read a prepared statement (attachment 12). Chair Alice Livdahl invited questions regarding Principal Pandiscio's statement.

Motion: To refer Thomas Panciscio's offer to serve as Superintendent of Schools for a two year period to the Superintendent Search Committee.

(K. Maxwell)  
(R. Carter)

Discussion continued regarding how the NESDEC contract was structured and how it would play into such an offer. A concern was raised as to what would happen if another District employee made a similar offer. District Counsel McCabe advised this position does not have to be posted in-house. Following inquiry as to whether the Superintendent Search Committee could be scheduled to meet sooner than June 21<sup>st</sup>, Superintendent Search Committee Chair Robert Carter explained that June 21<sup>st</sup> is the first date that both he and Dr. Zimmerman of NESDEC could be available to meet with the Superintendent Search Committee.

Motion: To extend the meeting for thirty minutes.

(D. Gibbs)  
(C. Capparelli)

Vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl

Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member Kelley Maxwell withdrew her motion.

Motion: Principal Thomas Pandiscio's proposal be addressed by the WRSD School Committee, calling a Special School Committee meeting if necessary.

(D. Gibbs)  
(M. Watson)

It was noted that since the School Committee had already named the Superintendent Search Committee, the search committee format should not be abandoned. If the search process is not followed as had been initiated, community members could be upset. . The Committee was reminded that a contract has been entered into with NESDEC to conduct this search and it would be a public relations disaster to break this contract.

Motion: To move the question.

(K. Maxwell)  
(M. Sherman)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Elizabeth Brennan

(Motion passed 17-1)

Roll call vote on main motion:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Kelly Maxwell  
Norman Plourde  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Cynthia Ahearn  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Phillip Mighdoll

Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Kathleen Sweeney

(Motion did not pass 9-9)

Motion: To refer Doctor Thomas Pandisciso's proposal to the Superintendent Search Committee, directing the Superintendent Search Committee to make a report to the School Committee at the June 27, 2005 School Committee meeting.

(M. Sherman)

(E. Brennan)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet  
David Gibbs

(Motion passed 16-2)

Before adjournment, Deputy Superintendent and Director of Operations Paul Soojian was recognized, noting this would be Deputy Superintendent Soojian's last School Committee meeting before departing the District to become Superintendent of Northbridge Schools.

Motion: Deputy Superintendent and Director of Operations Paul Soojian be publicly recognized and thanked for his excellent service to the Wachusett Regional School District, congratulated for his advancement to Superintendent of Northbridge Schools and wished the best of luck.

(R. Carter)  
(M. Watson)

Vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

## IX. Adjournment

Motion: To enter executive session, not to return to public session, for the purpose of discussing strategies for negotiations.

(M. Sherman)  
(C. Capparelli)

Roll Call Vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Charles Capparelli  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 10:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools