

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #263 Monday, June 27, 2005
7:00 PM

Library
Central Tree Middle School
Rutland

Committee Members Present:

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

Administration Present:

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Rebecca Petersen, Interim Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

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

Chair Alice Livdahl called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

I. Public Hearing

Chair Livdahl asked that those members of the public wishing to speak keep comments brief.

Patty Walton, Holden, read prepared statement (attachment 2).

Charles Gruszka, Principal, Dawson Elementary School, spoke in support of the appointment of Thomas Pandiscio as the next

Superintendent of Schools. Mr. Gruszka also spoke in support of the budget.

Maureen Floryan, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 3).

Melinda Johnson, Paxton, read a prepared statement (attachment 4).

Glenn Gaudette, Holden, spoke in support of the budget.

Chair Livdahl closed the public hearing portion of the meeting at 7:10 PM.

The Superintendent spoke in support of the School Committee's appointment of Thomas Pandiscio as the next Superintendent of Schools, commending Doctor Pandiscio's abilities.

The Superintendent brought to the School Committee's attention their need to approve the appropriation of SBA funds in the amount of \$1,066,720 to the Town of Sterling for reimbursement for the renovation at Houghton/Chocksett Schools (attachment 5).

Motion: To appropriate SBA funds in the amount of \$1,066,720 to the Town of Sterling for reimbursement for the renovation at Houghton/Chocksett Schools

(D. Gibbs)

(C. Capparelli)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl
Michael Sherman
Cynthia Ahearn
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Shirley Conrad
Charles Capparelli
Robert Carter
David Gibbs
Mark James
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Phillip Mighdoll
Judith Newton

John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Cheryl Rauh
Kathleen Sweeney
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

II. Recommendation of Superintendent for Amended FY06 Appropriation

It was agreed that at the meeting of the Community Outreach Subcommittee on June 23, 2005, to which representatives of the Member Town Selectboards and Finance/Advisory Committees were invited, good dialogue took place among those at the table.

The Superintendent discussed the need to maintain the School Committee's values while considering Member Towns' needs and distributed WRSD Proposed Amended FY06 Appropriation ("blue sheet") in which Member Town assessments would be reduced \$1,673,250 and the WRSD budget would increase \$1,397,288, funds to come from additional state revenues, E&D and revolving account set asides (attachment 6).

Motion: To approve the Proposed Amended FY06 Appropriation ("blue sheet").

(J. Nunnari)
(K. Maxwell)

The Committee discussed the "blue sheet" at length. It was noted that the 15 day extension granted by the Department of Education expires on July 6th. A Member asked if the July 6th deadline could be delayed, which was responded to in the negative by the Superintendent. Question was raised as to why the assessment numbers decreased but the appropriation number increased. The Superintendent responded that this was needed to offset the assessment reduction using a process approved by the auditors.. Before taking any vote on an assessment reduction, discussion inquiry was made on the sense of where the Member Towns stand.

Motion: To table the motion on the floor.

(D. Gibbs)
(P. Mighdoll)

This motion was not acted upon.

The Superintendent discussed the concern of the need for a two-thirds vote of the School Committee and with concerns expressed distributed WRSD Proposed Amended FY06 Appropriation ("pink sheet") in which Member Town assessments would be reduced \$789,168 and the WRSD budget would increase \$513,205 (attachment 7).

The Committee discussed the "pink sheet" at length.

Members Nunnari and Maxwell withdrew the motion on floor to approve the Proposed Amended FY06 Appropriation ("blue sheet").

Discussion continued regarding the "blue sheet" and the "pink sheet".

Motion: To accept Proposed Amended FY06 Appropriation ("pink sheet") which increases the FY06 appropriation by \$513,205 and reduces the assessments to Member Towns by \$789,168.

(M. James)
(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Michael Sherman
Cynthia Ahearn
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Shirley Conrad
Charles Capparelli
Robert Carter
David Gibbs
Mark James
Mary Catherine Maher
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Cheryl Rauh
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Alice Livdahl

Kelly Maxwell
Phillip Mighdoll
Judith Newton
Kathleen Sweeney

(Motion passed 14-5)

More discussion continued regarding the amended proposals. Members agreed that more dialogue needs to take place between the representatives of the Member Towns and the School Committee. Members agreed that it is important to keep School Committee values in mind. The Superintendent advised a meeting be scheduled, inviting representatives from the Member Town Selectboards and Finance/Advisory Committees to sit at the table with the Chair of the School Committee and the Chair of the Business/Finance Subcommittee to attempt to come to agreement on the FY06 appropriation.

Motion: That the School Committee Chair extend invitations to Member Town Selectboards and Finance/Advisory Committees to meet on Wednesday, July 6, 2005, at 6:30 PM in the cafeteria of Davis Hill Elementary School in Holden for the purpose of determining the FY06 School Committee assessment.

(C. Bazinet)
(D. Gibbs)

After discussion, Member Bazinet made a friendly amendment changing the date of the meeting to Thursday, July 14, 2005, since representatives of Member Town Selectboards and Finance/Advisory Committees have stated that Thursdays evenings are a preferred meeting night.

Motion: That the School Committee Chair extend invitations to Member Town Selectboards and Finance/Advisory Committees to meet on Thursday, July 14, 2005, at 6:30 PM in the cafeteria of Davis Hill Elementary School in Holden for the purpose of determining the FY06 School Committee assessment.

(C. Bazinet)
(D. Gibbs)

A suggestion was made that School Committee Members not discuss the July 14th meeting or the Proposed Amended FY06 Appropriation until all parties assemble at the table. Some Members objected to the term “gag order.” A third party facilitator was suggested.

Member Carter left the table at 8:37 PM.

The meeting would provide opportunity for Member Towns and the District to have opportunity to make PowerPoint presentations. Rooms will be set aside for individual town caucus sessions. Chair Livdahl will be the School Committee spokesperson at the meeting on July 14th, as Chair of the School Committee.

Member Carter returned to the table at 8:45 PM.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Chair's remarks:

Chair Livdahl reminded School Committee Members of the meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 30, 2005, at 5:30 PM for the purpose of entering executive session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and to negotiate with non-union personnel. The Chair reminded

Members that a quorum would be needed at that meeting and asked for a show of hands of those Members who planned to attend the meeting.

David White of Holden has been named ex officio member of the High School Building Committee at the request of High School Building Committee Chair Duncan Leith and High School Building Committee School Committee representative Kelly Maxwell.

The Ad Hoc Annual Audit Committee for FY05 (S. Conrad, Chair, P. Mighdoll, J. Newton) will be meeting in the near future.

Progress is being made in finding an audit firm to address issues raised in the Inspector General's Report.

Motion: To adjourn

(M. Sherman)
(C. Capparelli)

Motion passed by consensus.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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