

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1135 Monday, October 22, 2007

Cafeteria
Davis Hill Elementary School

Committee Members Present:

Margaret Watson, Chair	Steven Hammond
Cynthia Bazinet, Vice-chair	Robert Imber
Thomas Ackerman	Julianne Kelley
Robert Carter	Duncan Leith (7:27 PM)
Shirley Conrad	John Nunnari
Colleen Cipro	Norman Plourde
Melinda Coyle	Kathleen Sweeney

Committee Members Absent:

Cynthia Ahearn	Michael Sherman
Mark James	Joseph Sova
Judith Newton	Marcie Zaharee

Administration Present:

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

Student Representatives Present:

Hillary Blakeney
Sean Lane
Stephen Palombo

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 7:02 PM.

I. Public Hearing

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

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 1134th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 9, 2007

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

- B. Approval of Executive Session I Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 9, 2007

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 executive session I minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 9, 2007, to be released.

(R. Imber)
(C. Bazinet)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle

(The motion passed 11-0-2)

Motion: To approve the executive session II minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 9, 2007, not to be released.

(S. Hammond)
(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle

(The motion passed 11-0-2)

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 announced the next regular meeting of the School Committee will be **Tuesday**, November 13th, in light of Veterans' Day being observed on Monday, November 12th.

Chair Watson reminded the Committee of the New Member Orientation that will be offered by MASC Executive Director Glenn Koocher on Saturday, November 3, 2007, 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Chair Watson will be sending letters of invitation to Members Cipro, Kelley, Sova and Zaharee, but indicated that all members are welcome to attend.

Chair Watson introduced Dr. William Theurkauf of the Program in Molecular Medicine at UMass Medical School. Dr. Theurkauf gave background of the grant used to purchase a microscope and other equipment for use by Science Seminar students at WRHS. He also

spoke of his involvement with Science Seminar for the past eight years and spoke of the cooperative program that partners Ph.D. students from UMass with students doing independent research at Wachusett.

The Committee thanked Dr. Theurkauf for his dedication to Science Seminar. Dr. Theurkauf left the meeting at 7:18 PM.

B. Student Representatives

High school student Steve Palombo reported on the opening of additional hallways at the high school, telling how much more convenient it is getting around the building using these additional spaces. Open House for parents was held October 18th and reportedly went smoothly. Homecoming will take place, on the high school site, the weekend of October 26 & 27, 2007; the Drum Club had its first production in the Black Box theater; the first home game for the football team saw an enormous number of fans, all showing that the project is coming to the end and much excitement and enthusiasm is being generated by the student body and the staff as well.

C. Management Subcommittee (M. Watson, Chair, D. Leith, Vice-chair, C. Ahearn, C. Bazinet, R. Carter, R. Imber, J. Nunnari, M. Sherman, J. Sova)

The Management Subcommittee will meet Thursday, November 1st, at 6:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the Central Office.

D. Education Subcommittee (C. Bazinet, Chair, S. Hammond, Vice-chair, C. Ahearn, J. Kelley, J. Nunnari, N. Plourde, K. Sweeney, M. Zaharee)

The Education Subcommittee will meet Tuesday, October 23rd, at 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the Central Office.

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

In Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Sherman's absence, Vice-chair Shirley Conrad presented the following policies for second readings, waiving the readings:

1. Amended Policy AP4330 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Warrants** – second reading

Motion: To approve the second reading of Amended Policy AP4330 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Warrants**, waiving the reading.

(S. Conrad)
(M. Coyle)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously)

2. Policy Deletion AP7125 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Using Utilities** – second reading

Motion: To approve the second reading of Policy Deletion AP7125 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Using Utilities**, waiving the reading.

(S. Conrad)
(T. Ackerman)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously)

3. Amended Policy AP7131 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Buildings and Grounds Management** – second reading

Motion: To approve the second reading of Amended Policy AP7131 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Buildings and Grounds Management**, waiving the reading.

(S. Conrad)

(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously)

4. Reassignment of P7240 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Transportation Safety and Security Procedures** to P6621 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services Transportation Safety and Security Procedures**.

Motion: To approve the second reading to reassign P7240 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Transportation Safety and Security Procedures** to P6621 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services Transportation Safety and Security Procedures**, waiving the reading.

(S. Conrad)

(J. Nunnari)

Member Plourde asked how instruction is conducted, as outlined (#1 & #4) in the policy. Superintendent Pandiscio and Deputy Superintendent Locke explained.

7:27 PM Member Leith joined the meeting.

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Duncan Leith

(The motion passed 13-0-1)

- F. Community Outreach Subcommittee (K. Sweeney, Chair, N. Plourde, Vice-chair, C. Cipro, M. Coyle, J. Newton)

The Community Outreach Subcommittee will meet Thursday, November 8th, at 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the Central Office.

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

Audit Advisory Board Chair Conrad reported this board has not met recently, but expects there will be a meeting with the District auditors in the near future. She also reported she had been advised that the Holden representative may resign from the Audit Advisory Board, although no official letter of resignation has been received.

- H. 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 public hearings have now been conducted in all five Member Towns. When questioned, Subcommittee Chair Nunnari reported that at least one Selectboard member from each town had attended the public hearing in their town. Best estimate was roughly eight town officials attended the public hearings and four members of the public attended. Member Carter asked when the full School Committee could expect the ad hoc subcommittee's recommendations, to which Subcommittee Chair Nunnari answered late November, early December, noting the deadline for the final report is February 1, 2008.

The Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Regional Agreement will meet Tuesday, November 6th, at 7:00 PM in the Superintendent's Conference Room at the Central Office.

I. Building Committees

1. High School

High School Building Committee Chair Leith explained he was late arriving at this meeting because he had been at the Paxton Selectboard meeting, giving an update on the high school project.

He updated the Committee on recent construction activity at the high school. The lights on the fields are working; having cross country events and games on the high school campus is being enjoyed. The tennis courts are being worked on. Building Committee Chair Leith said he has heard rumors that the baseball field is not being finished up to standards and he wished to assure the Committee and the public that that rumor is untrue and the field will be finished properly. Buildings B and E were opened for use following the Columbus Day holiday. The modulars are empty and being readied for the move to Parker Charter School, although that move will not occur for several weeks.

Member Sweeney reported she has attended a number of events at the high school in the past few weeks and she has heard many positive comments.

J. School Council Reports

Central Tree Middle School (J. Nunnari), Chocksett Middle School (J. Sova), Davis Hill Elementary School (C. Bazinet), Dawson

Elementary School (M. James), Glenwood Elementary School (J. Kelley), Houghton Elementary School (N. Plourde), Mayo Elementary School (S. Hammond), Mountview Middle School (M. Sherman), Naquag Elementary School (C. Cipro), Paxton Center School (C. Ahearn), Thomas Prince School (R Imber/K. Sweeney), Wachusett Regional High School (D. Leith), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (M. Zaharee)

The following school council liaisons reported on recent meetings:

Robert Imber – Thomas Prince School

Melinda Coyle – Paxton Center School

Kathleen Sweeney, Thomas Prince School meeting. Member Sweeney asked the status of the roof at Thomas Prince, which the Superintendent gave an update on.

John Nunnari reported the Central Tree School Council has met, but he was unable to attend. He was provided a copy of the notes of that meeting.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Superintendent Pandiscio updated the School Committee on the progress being made in attracting interest in a pre-school program at the Early Childhood Center. Under the leadership of Interim Director of Operations Darryll McCall, flyers have been distributed and an advertisement has been run in the newspaper, resulting in extraordinary interest. The program should be in good shape with enrollment of typically developing students.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

Motion: To authorize the transfer of \$215,215 from the Instructional Support Appropriation Category to the Personnel Appropriation Category.

(J. Nunnari)
(D. Leith)

The Superintendent spoke to this motion and explained reason for this action.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson

Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Duncan Leith
Julianne Kelley
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
None

(The motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To approve the appropriation of School Building Authority funds in the amount of \$1,870,996. to the Town of Holden for reimbursement for Dawson Elementary School, Davis Hill Elementary School and Dr. Leroy E. Mayo Elementary School

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Duncan Leith
Julianne Kelley
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
None

(The motion passed unanimously)

No one from the public wished to address the School Committee.

VII. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business brought before the Committee.

VIII. New Business

Member Conrad raised the issue of the signposts on Boutelle Road in Sterling, referring to attachments 9 and 10 in the Superintendent's Report of October 18, 2007. There was discussion and debate on who is responsible for the electricity used to run the lights in the school zone and who is responsible for installation/maintenance of these lights. The Superintendent's opinion is that the public safety of children does not always have to be a school responsibility and the District should not have to pay for public works (i.e. the blinking lights on Boutelle Road). Member Conrad's concern is this matter will fall through the cracks and there will be no working signage outside the Houghton and Chocksett schools in Sterling. She commented that if, in fact, the other four towns are responsible for the maintenance of such equipment and/or the electricity to run, the Town of Sterling should be notified. Member Nunnari stated his opinion that the fact that the lights on Boutelle Road are not working is a safety issue that needs to be addressed/corrected now and the financial responsibility assigned later.

Motion: To direct the Superintendent to survey all safety signage of the schools within the District and to report back to this committee on the current status as soon as practical.

Further, to authorize the Business Manager (a) to follow up on the bid already received by the Town of Sterling, and/or to procure additional bids, if needed, to replace the current signage and; (b) to authorize the Business Manager to purchase new equipment with a total value not to exceed \$8,000; and (c) to authorize a transfer from E&D to the appropriate account, to cover the cost.

(J. Nunnari)

(S. Conrad)

Member Sweeney made a friendly amendment, which was accepted by the maker and the seconder of the motion, to address this motion as separate parts. A voice vote on this friendly amendment was passed by consensus.

Discussion of this motion and related topic ensued. Why the School Committee would get involved in this was raised.

8:15 Member Sweeney left the table.

The Superintendent expressed his being uncomfortable that there are no firm standards to base action on. Would the District then become responsible for painting cross walks, fixing sewer leaks, etc.

8:17 PM Member Sweeney returned to the table.

A member commented that the School Committee is not in the traffic control business. Member Nunnari assured the Committee he is not trying to set a precedent, but does feel the town and the District could share the responsibility to fix the equipment.

8:25 PM Student Steven Palombo left the table.

Discussion continued.

8:28 PM Student Steven Palombo returned to the table.

Motion: To direct the Superintendent to survey all safety signage of the schools within the District and to report back to this committee on the current status as soon as practical.

(J. Nunnari)

(S. Conrad)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Duncan Leith
Julianne Kelley
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet

Abstained:

Margaret Watson

Present:

Melinda Coyle

(The motion passed 11-1-1-1)

Motion: To authorize the Business Manager (a) to follow up on the bid already received by the Town of Sterling, and/or to procure additional bids, if needed, to replace the current signage and; (b) to authorize the Business

Manager to purchase new equipment with a total value not to exceed \$8,000; and (c) to authorize a transfer from E&D to the appropriate account, to cover the cost.

(J. Nunnari)

This motion died due to lack of second.

In order to give Member Carter direction when he is representing the Wachusett Regional School Committee at the MASC/MASS Joint Conference in November, Chair Watson informed the Committee that resolutions to be acted upon at the Joint Conference will be reviewed by this school committee and the Committee will vote to direct Member Carter to either support or not support.

8:30 PM Superintendent Pandiscio left the table.

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved that MASC file legislation that will require the Department of Education and/or the charter school will provide the names, addresses and dates of birth of all pre-enrolled and actual charter school students to the sending district on October 1st, March 1st and the last day of school in addition to all required enrollment reports.*

(C. Bazinet)

(S. Conrad)

8:34 PM Superintendent Pandiscio returned to the table.

8:35 PM Student Hillary Blakeney left the table.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet
Melinda Coyle
Duncan Leith
Kathleen Sweeney

Abstained:

Margaret Watson

(The motion passed 9-4-1)

8:37 PM Student Hillary Blakeney returned to the table.

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved that MASC file legislation that will have the effect of ensuring that the calculation of circuit breaker aid should include the cost of transportation for both in-district and out-of-district students and that the circuit breaker funding be increased to ensure that districts receive 75% of their expenditures above four times the foundation budget for those students who qualify under the circuit breaker.*

(S. Conrad)
(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Melinda Coyle
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde

Abstained:

Margaret Watson

(The motion failed 1-12-1)

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls upon the legislature to:*

- *Revise the Chapter 70 formula with the appropriate changes in order that the Foundation Budget will reflect the actual cost of educating a child in each Massachusetts city, town, and regional school district.*
- *Urge the legislature to convene an “adequacy study group” for the expressed purpose of determining an accurate level of the*

Foundation Budget that will reflect the true cost of educating a child in Massachusetts.

(K. Sweeney)
(M. Coyle)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved that the MASC affirms its advocacy positions on the following matters of public policy, calling upon the legislature to:*

- 1. Provide adequate state funding for publicly governed schools, a state tax rate that sustains adequate funding, and sufficient fiscal authority for local school committees.*

(S. Hammond)
(M. Coyle)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari

Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
None

(The motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved that the MASC affirms its advocacy positions on the following matters of public policy, calling upon the legislature to:*

2. *Reorganize the State Board of Education, and remove the prohibitions against sitting school committee members and practicing public school educators from serving on the Board.*

(C. Bazinet)
(R. Carter)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
Melinda Coyle
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith

Abstained:
Margaret Watson

(The motion passed 10-3-1)

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved that the MASC affirms its advocacy positions on the following matters of public policy, calling upon the legislature to:*

3. *Direct 100% of state Medicaid reimbursements to school districts that are providing the services to be retained by those districts.*

(D. Leith)
(S. Conrad)

Members Leith and Conrad withdrew the motion, as it does not affect the Wachusett Regional School District.

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved that the MASC affirms its advocacy positions on the following matters of public policy, calling upon the legislature to:*

4. *Enact a moratorium on new charter schools and charter school expansion until issues of funding and governance are resolved, and establish a rigorous accountability program for charter schools that provide an accurate, comparable measure of student achievement with non-charter schools.*

(S. Conrad)
(T. Ackerman)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

Robert Carter
Melinda Coyle

Abstained:

Margaret Watson
Colleen Cipro

(The motion passed 10-2-2)

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved that the MASC affirms its advocacy positions on the following matters of public policy, calling upon the legislature to:*

5. *Restore to School Committees the right which they enjoyed until April of 2004 to approve School Improvement Plans.*

(M. Coyle)
(K. Sweeney)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Melinda Coyle

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Abstained:

Margaret Watson

(The motion failed 12-1-1)

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved that the MASC affirms its advocacy positions on the following matters of public policy, calling upon the legislature to:*

6. *Develop a variety of assessment instruments so that no single test determines the fate of a student; evaluate the impact of the MCAS on teaching and learning; and assess the impact of MCAS, including the effect on school drop-out rates, on certain vulnerable categories of students, including, but not limited to vocational students, disabled students, and English Language Learners.*

(K. Sweeney)
(R. Imber)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Colleen Cipro
Melinda Coyle
Robert Imber
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

Robert Carter
Shirley Conrad
Steven Hammond

Abstained:

Margaret Watson
Julianne Kelley

(The motion passed 9-3-2)

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved that the MASC affirms its advocacy positions on the following matters of public policy, calling upon the legislature to:*

7. *Restore to school districts greater flexibility in serving English Language Learners.*

(C. Bazinet)
(D. Leith)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously)

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn to executive session for the purpose of contract negotiation and possible litigation, not to return to public session.

(M. Coyle)
(S. Hammond)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet

Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
None

(The motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

TGP:rlp