

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1099, Tuesday, October 25, 2005  
7:00 PM

Library  
Central Tree Middle School

*Committee Members Present:*

Alice Livdahl, Chair	Mark James
Michael Sherman, Vice-chair	Mary Catherine Maher
Cynthia Ahearn (7:38 PM)	Kelly Maxwell
Cynthia Bazinet	Phillip Mighdoll
Elizabeth Brennan	Judith Newton
Robert Carter	Norman Plourde
Shirley Conrad	Kathleen Sweeney
David Gibbs	Tammy Tod
	Margaret Watson

*Committee Members Absent:*

Charles Capparelli  
John Nunnari  
Cheryl Rauh

*Administration Present:*

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools  
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary 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 7:03 PM.

I. Public Hearing

Chair Livdahl welcomed Representative Lewis Evangelidis and invited him to address the School Committee on the Chapter 70 funding formula. Representative Evangelidis gave an overview of what is happening with Chapter 70 at the state level. He encouraged School Committee members to contact their State senators and representatives and to also make every

effort to attend a Regional Caucus meeting to be held in Holden. It was noted that the date of this meeting, originally scheduled for November 14, 2005, will be rescheduled to a date between November 16<sup>th</sup> and November 28<sup>th</sup> and Representative Evangelidis will notify School Committee members of the rescheduled date.

Members were given the opportunity to address Representative Evangelidis. Phil Mighdoll noted that Roger Hatch of the Department of Education will be attending the December 12<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting to address this same subject and would like Representative Evangelidis invited to also attend the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Chair Livdahl thanked Representative Evangelidis for coming to the meeting. Representative Evangelidis left the meeting at 7:36 PM.

Chair Livdahl continued with the public hearing portion of the meeting, inviting those who wished to address the School Committee to do so.

Edwin Meyer, Holden, addressed the School Committee.

Karen King, Holden, addressed the School Committee, suggesting that the District adopt an "Opt-In" policy rather than an "Opt-Out" policy with regard to sharing information with branches of the armed forces (attachment 2)

## II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 1098<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 12, 2005 – approved by consensus, Member Maxwell abstaining, with the following corrections being made:
  - Correct meeting date is **October** 12, 2005
  - Pg. 3 – bullet 3: December 12, 2005 – Roger Hatch of the Department of **Education** will address the School Committee
  - Pg 4 – C. – Management Subcommittee Chair **Livdahl**
  - Pg 18 – makers of motions: **R. Carter** and **M. James**
- B. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on June 30, 2005, to be released

Roll call vote:  
In favor:

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

Opposed:  
None

Abstained:  
Robert Carter  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 14-0-3)

### 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 appointed herself as a member of the Business/Finance Subcommittee.

Chair Livdahl reported she will inform the State Ethics Commission of the School Committee vote taken October 12, 2005 at which time "The School Committee finds that the interest of Thomas G. Pandiscio, Ed.D. in WREA collective

bargaining is not so substantial as to be deemed likely to affect the integrity of the services or outcome of WREA collective bargaining which the Commonwealth may expect from Thomas G. Pandiscio, Ed.D., in which case it shall not be a violation for the employee to participate in the particular matter.” Chair Livdahl will have a copy of her correspondence to the State Ethics Commission included in the next Superintendent’s Report.

Chair Livdahl informed the Committee she had composed a letter to Attorney Elizabeth Valerio providing additional documentation to Attorney Valerio to assist with her review of issues addressed in the Inspector General’s Report.

B. Student Advisory Committee

No members of the Student Advisory Committee were present.

C. Management Subcommittee (A. Livdahl, Chair, C. Ahearn, E. Brennan, C. Capparelli, R. Carter, M. C. Maher, J. Newton, M. Sherman, M. Watson)

The creation of the positions of Secretary to the School Committee and an Assistant to the Secretary of the School Committee will be on the agenda of the next Management Subcommittee.

Motion: To refer School Committee Policy 4310 **Policy Relating to Business/Finance Payroll** to the Management Subcommittee for review.

(M. Sherman)  
(Unknown)

Vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher

Kelly Maxwell  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member Gibbs asked that the Management Subcommittee consider the start time of School Committee meetings and the content of School Committee agenda.

Member Watson called attention to the Management Subcommittee minutes of October 5, 2005, page 2 and asked that the following correction be made: “request for vacation leave ~~should~~ SHALL not be unreasonably denied.”

Per information obtained from MASC Executive Director Glenn Koocher, Member Maxwell requested the Management Subcommittee consider the fact that the School Committee has authority to rewrite job descriptions and asked that this topic be included on the Management Subcommittee agenda.

Motion: To accept the second reading of Draft Policy DP5273.1 **Policy Relating to Personnel Management *Alternatives to Travel and Travel Expense Reduction***, waiving the reading.  
(M. Sherman)  
(E. Brennan)

Member Watson made the suggestion that approval of this policy wait until Attorney Valerio has review the wording. Member Sherman withdrew the motion until Attorney Valerio reviews the wording and advises the School Committee.

Motion: Accept Draft Policy DP5273.1 **Policy Relating to Personnel Management *Alternatives to Travel and Travel Expense Reduction***.  
(P. Mighdoll)

Motion died due to lack of second.

- D. Education Subcommittee (M. Watson, Chair, C. Bazinet, D. Gibbs, A. Livdahl, J. Nunnari, N. Plourde, K. Sweeney)

Chair Watson reported on discussions that took place at the Education Subcommittee meeting of September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Motion: To accept the second reading of Draft Policy DP3420 **Policy Relating to Education *Instructional Materials***, waiving the reading.

(M. Watson)

(M. Maher)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To refer Opt-Out policy to the Education Subcommittee for review and possible adaptation of an Opt-In policy.

(M. Maher)

(R. Carter)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

- E. Business/Finance Subcommittee (M. Sherman, Chair, S. Conrad, M. James, A. Livdahl, M. C. Maher, P. Mighdoll, J. Newton, T. Tod)

The Business/Finance Subcommittee met on October 20, 2005. The next meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, November 10, 2005, at 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center.

Member Conrad reported that Business/Finance Subcommittee members will have the opportunity to review warrants at the Central Office before School Committee meetings.

Member Gibbs brought to the School Committee's attention the fact that the June 8<sup>th</sup> and June 22<sup>nd</sup> minutes of the Business/Finance Subcommittee did not get approved by that subcommittee until October 20, 2005. These two sets of June

minutes were not included in the Superintendent's Report because that report was prepared for mailing the same date as the Business/Finance Subcommittee meeting at which time the minutes were approved.

Member Maher gave timetable of how the School Committee had been kept up-to-date with the scope of the report to be prepared by P. L. Jones & Associates. Discussion around the table spoke to communication issues the School Committee has, citing the delay of minutes as a problem. The sharing of/releasing of minutes must be improved.

- F. Community Outreach Subcommittee (E. Brennan, Chair, C. Ahearn, S. Conrad, K. Maxwell, P. Mighdoll, J. Newton, N., Plourde)

A meeting of the Community Outreach Subcommittee has been called for November 2, 2005. Doctor Pandiscio distributed an up-to-date posting (attachment 3)

Member James recommend that the Community Outreach Subcommittee begin gathering information of cost overruns at the high school in preparation for approaching the Member Towns for additional funds. Doctor Pandiscio's best guess as to when the District would approach the Member Towns for additional funds would be in January 2006.

Good business practice would be for committee/subcommittee chairs to poll members of their committees/subcommittees when scheduling meetings.

Motion: The Community Outreach Subcommittee shall investigate and formulate a process by which the School Committee can provide timely responses to community issues such as those raised in public sessions. The investigation will seek the advice and counsel of the Superintendent and a sample of regional public issues. The Community Outreach Subcommittee will make a recommendation at the November 14, 2005 meeting of the School Committee.

(P. Mighdoll)  
(E. Brennan)



Member Sherman noted that a report to the full School Committee by November 14, 2005 seemed a bit ambitious and made a friendly amendment that the Subcommittee report to the full School Committee by December 12, 2005.

Member Sherman left the table at 8:34 PM

Motion: To move the question.

(R. Carter)  
(E. Brennan)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Cynthia Ahearn  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Tammy Tod

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Norman Plourde  
Margaret Watson

Abstained:

Alice Livdahl

(Motion passed 10-5-1)

Motion: The Community Outreach Subcommittee shall investigate and formulate a process by which the School Committee can provide timely responses to community issues such as those raised in public sessions. The investigation will seek the advice and counsel of the Superintendent and a sample of regional public issues. The Community Outreach

Subcommittee will make a recommendation at the December 12, 2005 meeting of the School Committee.

(P. Mighdoll)  
(E. Brennan)

Motion passed by voice vote.

#### G. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

1. Annual Audit Subcommittee for FY05 (C. Conrad, Chair, P. Mighdoll, J. Newton)

It is understood that a draft presentation by auditors will be made at a Business/Finance Subcommittee meeting and recommended that the Chairs of the Member Town Finance/Advisory Committees be invited to that presentation. Subcommittee Chair Conrad requested that drafts of the FY05 Management Letter and audit being prepared by Melanson Heath & Co. be made available for review by the Annual Audit Subcommittee for FY05 prior to distribution to the full Committee.

8:37 PM Member Sherman returned to the table.

A new committee (Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Develop a Plan for Establishing a Permanent Audit Committee) will be named. Chair Livdahl asked those interested in serving on this new committee let her know their interest. Member Watson questioned if this would be a new standing committee; if so, would that require a change in School Committee By-Laws?

Subcommittee Chair Conrad explained the difference between a fraud risk assessment vs a fraud risk examination.

2. Subcommittee to Develop the Superintendent's Evaluation (N. Plourde, Chair, K. Sweeney, T. Tod)

Subcommittee Chair Plourde distributed policies DP1311 and AP 1312 (attachments 4 & 5). Chair Plourde explained the proposed wording of these policies is being shared for informational purposes and for referral to the Management Subcommittee.

Chair Plourde invited School Committee members to review the **School Committee Evaluation of the Superintendent of**

**Schools** document and advise him of comments and/or recommendations, no later than November 1<sup>st</sup>. Member James suggested emails sent with such comments and/or recommendations be cc'd to Tom Pandiscio for inclusion in the next Superintendent's Report. This document will be referred to the Management Subcommittee.

Chair Plourde gave background of the **School Committee Self-Improvement Questionnaire** document which had been included in the Superintendent's Report. It has been suggested that School Committee members address all 19 statements on the questionnaire and that such a self-evaluation should be an on-going, year long process, not something done just on occasion.

Member Maxwell voiced that the goals of the School Committee have not been reviewed in some time and suggested that matter be addressed at some point.

#### H. Building Committees

##### 1. High School

Tom Pandiscio referred to pages 4 and 5 of his last report. He reported on his October 18, 2005 meeting with representatives of the School Building Authority. When more firm numbers are known, a meeting with Member Town representatives to discuss additional funding could be called.

Member Carter requested that a copy of the District Treasurer's job description be included in the next Superintendent's Report.

##### 2. Rutland – Naquag/Central Tree.

##### 3. Rutland – Elementary School – Elizabeth Brennan

The recent death on the site of this project was discussed. To date, all details of accident are not known.

Project update given.

#### I. School Council Reports:

Margaret Watson attended the October Mayo School Council meeting and gave her report.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

1. Motion: To accept the Sterling School building projects (Houghton Elementary School and Chocksett Middle School) as complete.

(N. Plourde)  
(S. Conrad)

Sterling Executive Secretary Timothy Bragan's letter of October 21, 2005 was distributed (attachment 6).

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

David Gibbs  
Phillip Mighdoll

(Motion passed 15-0-2)

9:23 PM Member Mighdoll left the table.

9:25 PM Member Mighdoll returned to the table.

2. Motion: To adopt the *Amended FY06 Appropriation* as presented by the Superintendent and recommended by the Business/Finance Subcommittee.

(M. Sherman)

(M. James)

FY06 Appropriation Budget was distributed (attachment 7).

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

B. Discussion of Report

Motion: To reconsider the motion taken on October 12, 2005 which was as follows: *To authorize and proceed, at a cost not to exceed \$10,000, that P. L. Jones & Associates, P.C., per recommendation of independent counsel, assemble former*

*superintendent Alfred D. Tutela's September 30, 2005 response,  
gather all materials together and forward to attorney for review.*

(D. Gibbs)  
(M. James)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Norman Plourde  
Kathleen Sweeney  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:  
None

Abstained:

Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Kelly Maxwell  
Judith Newton

(Motion passed 12-0-5)

Motion: To authorize the expenditure of up to \$2,250 for P. L. Jones & Associates, P.C. to evaluate and include Dr. Tutela's response to the P. L. Jones report, and up to \$7,750 for Attorney Elizabeth Valerio to review the policies proposed to address the Inspector General's concerns, and to advise the committee on whether legal action should be taken to try to recover any of the expenditures questioned in the I. G.'s Report.

(D. Gibbs)  
(C. Bazinet)

Member Carte requested that the motion be reread and made the friendly amendment to remove “to the P. L. Jones report” in the above motion. Member Gibbs accepted this friendly amendment.

Motion: To authorize the expenditure of up to \$2,250 for P. L. Jones & Associates, P.C. to evaluate and include Dr. Tutela’s response, and up to \$7,750 for Attorney Elizabeth Valerio to review the policies proposed to address the Inspector General’s concerns, and to advise the committee on whether legal action should be taken to try to recover any of the expenditures questioned in the I. G.’s Report.

(D. Gibbs)  
(C. Bazinet)

Member Mighdoll requested that Attorney Valerio also be asked to advise the School Committee on the vacation buyback paid to Doctor Tutela.

Member Gibbs withdrew his motion.

Member Sherman stated he did not feel the \$18,000 paid to Doctor Tutela needs to be included in the original charge to Attorney Valerio.

9:43 PM Member Gibbs left the table.

9:43 PM Member Brennan left the table.

9:44 PM Member Gibbs returned to the table.

Motion: To authorize the expenditure of up to \$2,250 for P. L. Jones & Associates, P.C. to evaluate and include Dr. Tutela’s response, and up to \$7,750 for Attorney Elizabeth Valerio to review the policies proposed to address the Inspector General’s concerns, and to advise the committee on whether legal action should be taken to try to recover any of the expenditures questioned in the I. G.’s Report.

(C. Bazinet)  
(M. James)

Motion: To move the question.

(R. Carter)  
(M. Sherman)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Roll call vote on main motion:

In favor:

Alice Livdahl  
Michael Sherman  
Cynthia Ahearn  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Mark James  
Mary Catherine Maher  
Norman Plourde  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:



Kelly Maxwell

Abstained:

David Gibbs  
Phillip Mighdoll  
Judith Newton  
Kathleen Sweeney

(Motion passed 11-1-4)

9:47 PM Brennan returned to the table.

Member Carter commended Tom Pandiscio on his inaugural weeks as the superintendent, noting Dr. Pandiscio is off to a “super start.”

Member Mighdoll questioned the difference between a press release vs a press conference. Member Mighdoll distributed copies of his email of October 23, 2005 regarding this matter (attachment 8).

Motion: To adjourn executive session not to return to public session

(K. Maxwell)  
(M. Sherman)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:  
None

Abstained:  
David Gibbs

(Motion passed 16-0-1)

10:00 PM Member Gibbs left the meeting.

Motion: To extend the meeting 30 minutes in order to go into executive session.

(R. Carter)  
(S. Conrad)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

TGP/rlp/School Committee/Minutes