

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1154 Monday, November 10, 2008

Cafeteria
Davis Hill Elementary School

Committee Members Present:

Margaret Watson, Chair
John Nunnari, Vice-chair
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson

Mark James
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Marcie Zaharee

Committee Members Absent:

Thomas Ackerman

Colleen Cipro

Administration Present:

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

Student Representatives Present:

No students were in attendance.

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 7:00 PM.

I. Public Hearing

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

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of 1153rd Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRDSC held on October 27, 2008

Two minor typographical errors, which will be corrected, were noted on page 4.

Motion: To approve the minutes, as corrected, of the regular School Committee meeting held October 27, 2008.

(R. Imber)
(J. Sova)

The minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held October 27, 2008 were approved by consensus, with Members Jackson, James, Pantos, Sherman and Zaharee abstaining.

B. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional District School Committee held on October 27, 2008

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 minutes of the executive session held October 27, 2008, to be released.

(J. Sova)
(D. Leith)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Duncan Leith
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Joseph Sova

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Stacey Jackson
Mark James
Michael Pantos
Michael Sherman

Marcie Zaharee

(Motion passed 12-0-5)

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 spoke of the New Member Orientation that will take place on Saturday, January 24, 2009, from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the Central Office. This orientation will be presented by MASC Executive Director Glenn Koocher. All interested members are welcome to attend.

B. Student Representatives

There were no students in attendance.

C. Management Subcommittee (M. Watson, Chair, J. Nunnari, Vice-chair, C. Bazinet, M. Coyle, R. Imber, D. Leith, M. Pantos, N. Flourde, M. Sherman)

Chair Watson reminded members of the Management Subcommittee meeting scheduled for November 13th, at which time the DRAFT Superintendent's evaluation instrument will be reviewed, in preparation for a vote of the full School Committee at the November 24th regular meeting. School Committee policies, the 1000 series, will be reviewed at the November 13th meeting. Chair Watson explained that School Committee members who are not on the Management Subcommittee are welcome to make suggestions/give input on policies to be reviewed by the Management Subcommittee.

Chair Watson read a vote of the Management Subcommittee taken at its October 28th meeting: *The annual School Improvement Plan review by principals be discontinued and that building principals attend a School Committee meeting to present a brief overview of their school.* This matter will be brought up for discussion later in this meeting.

D. Education Subcommittee (C. Bazinet, Chair, S. Hammond, Vice-chair, R. Imber, S. Jackson, J. Nunnari, R. Pelczarski, M. Zaharee)

Subcommittee Chair Bazinet reported that the next meeting of the Education Subcommittee is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19th.

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

1. Draft Policy – DP4324 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Disposal of Surplus Supplies & Equipment** – second reading

Motion: To approve the second reading of draft policy DP4324 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Disposal of Surplus Supplies & Equipment**, waiving the reading.

(M. Sherman)
(S. Conrad)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The next meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee will be Wednesday, November 12th.

- F. Community Outreach Subcommittee (C. Cipro, Chair, R. Pelczarski, Vice-chair, R. Carter, N. Plourde)

Community Outreach Vice-chair Pelczarski reported he has attended a meeting of the Paxton Selectboard on behalf of the Community Outreach Subcommittee and Community Outreach members will attend Selectboard meetings in the other towns in the near future. This subcommittee will meet next on December 8th.

G. Audit Advisory Board (S. Conrad, J. Sova)

Audit Advisory Board Chair Conrad reported that the AAB will meet on November 18th to review draft reports prepared by District auditors Powers & Sullivan.

H. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

1. Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Study Possible Academic Disparity Among the Schools in the Wachusett District (S. Hammond, Chair, S. Conrad, M. Coyle, R. Imber, J. Nunnari)

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Chair Hammond reported on the meeting held November 3rd. The next meeting will be November 24th, rescheduled from November 17th. The last meeting of this ad hoc subcommittee is planned for December 1st, with a report to the full School Committee on December 8th.

2. Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Negotiate the Superintendent's Contract (C. Bazinet, Chair, T. Ackerman, D. Leith, J. Nunnari, N. Plourde)

Chair Watson thanked the members of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Negotiate the Superintendent's Contract for the time and attention given to negotiating a contract with Superintendent of Schools Thomas Pandiscio. This contract has been signed by all parties. Chair Watson discharged this ad hoc subcommittee.

I. Building Committee

1. High School

High School Building Committee Chair Leith reported construction on the baseball and softball dugouts continues. He commented on the dedication of the athletic field, planned for 10:00 AM on Thursday, November 27th. The Building Committee is slated to meet on December 10th. Superintendent Pandiscio added remarks about the status of slopes on the high school site.

J. School Council Reports:

Central Tree Middle School (M. Pantos), Chocksett Middle School (J. Sova), Davis Hill Elementary School (R. Carter), Dawson Elementary

School (M. James), Glenwood Elementary School (J. Nunnari), Houghton Elementary School (S. Conrad), Mayo Elementary School (S. Hammond), Mountview Middle School (C. Bazinet), Naquag Elementary School (C. Cipro), Paxton Center School (R. Pelczarski), Thomas Prince School (R. Imber), Wachusett Regional High School (D. Leith), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (S. Jackson)

Member Jackson reported the Special Education Parent Advisory Council will meet on November 12th.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Member Carter asked the Superintendent how many past winners of the Adams Scholarship had taken advantage of the scholarship. Superintendent Pandiscio will research and report back to the Committee.

Superintendent Pandiscio distributed a sample copy of the Statement of Interest that would need to be filed with the Massachusetts School Building Authority in connection with the Mountview Middle School (attachment 2). Superintendent Pandiscio reported on a recent meeting he and Business Manager Brennan had with Holden town officials Brian Bullock and Dennis Lipka. Questions were asked and answered about Mountview Middle School.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

Motion: Having convened in an open meeting on November 10, 2008, the Wachusett Regional District School Committee in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, vote to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest dated November 14, 2008 for the Mountview Middle School located at 270 Shrewsbury Street, Holden, Massachusetts which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which Wachusett Regional School District may be invited to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future

- Replacement or renovation of a building which is structurally unsound or otherwise in a condition seriously jeopardizing the health and safety of school children, where no alternative exists.
- Elimination of existing severe overcrowding.
- Replacement, renovation or modernization of the heating system in a schoolhouse to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in the schoolhouse.

and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Wachusett Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

(M. Sherman)

(R. Imber)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

VI. Public Hearing

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

VII. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business brought before the School Committee.

VIII. New Business

The matter of School Improvement Plan review by the School Committee was brought forward. Superintendent Pandiscio explained an alternative to setting aside many hours (either one full day or several evenings) to have principals present their School Improvement Plans to members of the School Committee could be to have

school principals attend regularly scheduled meetings of the School Committee (one time each month), beginning in January 2009, to present a brief overview of what is happening in their school. The down side of this option is that it could take as long as fifteen months (depending on how the schedule might work out) for the School Committee to hear from all principals. Suggestions were made to have Deputy Superintendent Locke and Director of Operations McCall provide summaries of School Improvement Plans and to have School Improvement Plans posted on the District website.

Motion: The annual School Improvement Plan review by principals be discontinued and that building principals attend a School Committee meeting to present a brief overview of their school.

(D. Leith)
(C. Bazinet)

Member Sherman offered a friendly amendment to be added to the motion language: "An executive summary of budgetary implications will be made available to the School Committee by the first week in February and School Improvement Plans will be posted on the District website."

Discussion continued. Chair Watson advised the Committee that the main motion could be withdrawn and the matter remanded to the Management Subcommittee for further consideration.

Motion: That action on the motion on the floor be postponed to a time certain, November 24, 2008.

(M. Sherman)
(M. Coyle)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Nunnari
Robert Carter
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet

Norman Plourde

Abstained:

Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 14-2-1)

Motion: To remand the motion “*The annual School Improvement Plan review by principals be discontinued and that building principals attend a School Committee meeting to present a brief overview of their school. An executive summary of budgetary implications will be made available to the School Committee by the first week in February and School Improvement Plans will be posted on the District website.*” to the Management Subcommittee. The Management Subcommittee will revisit this issue and prepare a revised motion for action at the November 24, 2008 regularly scheduled School Committee meeting.

(M. Sherman)

(M. Coyle)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Nunnari
Robert Carter
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet
Norman Plourde

Abstained:

Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 14-2-1)

Chair Watson explained that Member Carter will be the WRDSC delegate at the November 2008 MASC/MASS Joint Conference and Member Coyle will be the alternate. In preparation for voting on resolutions at the Joint

Conference, the School Committee will be asked to give Member Carter direction on action he should take when voting on these resolutions.

Motion: To support the following resolution: *Therefore be it resolved that legislation be filed and/or supported that would change the Special Education Student Enrollment counts to be a five year rolling average of the actual Special Education enrollment counts.*

(M. Coyle)

(M. Pantos)

Chair Watson handed the gavel to Vice-chair Nunnari so she could speak to this motion. Following that address to the Committee, Chair Watson took the gavel back.

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Chair Watson read the following:

To support the following resolution: *Therefore be it resolved that the Massachusetts Association of School Committee reaffirms 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.*

2. *Support a formal “adequacy study” to determine the actual cost of providing an appropriate education for all students.*
3. *Direct 100% of state Medicaid reimbursements to school districts that are providing the services to be retained by those districts.*
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.*
5. *Restore to School Committees the right which they enjoyed until April of 2004 to approve School Improvement Plans.*
6. *Develop a variety of additional assessment instruments so that no single test determines the fate of a student.*
7. *Restore to school districts greater flexibility in serving English Language Learners.*
8. *Fund METCO receiving districts from a general appropriation at a rate equal to the school choice rate.*

Following consideration that the above language, if made a motion for action by the School Committee, would require eight separate votes, and following discussion of other resolution language, the Committee took the following action:

Motion: When representing the Wachusett Regional District School Committee at the November 2008 MASC/MASS Joint Conference, the School Committee hereby gives Member Carter leeway to vote as he sees fit based on his experience with this school committee.

(M. Pantos)

(M. Zaharee)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova

Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn to executive session for the purpose of pending litigation,
not to return to public session

(M. Sherman)
(S. Conrad)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Michael Pantos
Robert Pelczarski
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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