

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1051, Monday January 13, 2003
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

John Rokicki, Chairman	Alice Livdahl
Duncan Leith, Vice-Chairman	Peter MacDonald (7:45 PM)
Donald Benson	Kelly Maxwell
Clifford Connell	John Nunnari
Carol Esperti	Julie Scott
David Fedeli	Tammy Tod
Kimberly Ferguson	Margaret Watson
Patricia Gates	Patricia Young
Jane James	

Committee Members Absent:

Jeffrey Gibbs	Natalie Mello
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Administration Present:

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Paul K. Soojian, Director of Operations
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services
Philip E. Campbell, Director of Student/Information Services
Susan H. Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Others Present:

Linda Lehans, *The Landmark*
Marc Sanguinetti, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*
Maureen Floryan, Holden
Larry Floryan, Holden
David Gibbs, Sterling
Melinda Johnson, Paxton
Mark James, Holden
Cynthia Janik, Holden

Chairman John Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:12 PM. He introduced the two new members recently appointed from the Town of Princeton, Patricia Gates and Clifford Connell.

I. Public Hearing

Maureen Floryan, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 1).

Mark James, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 2).

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

David Gibbs, Sterling, read a prepared statement (attachment 4)

Chairman John Rokicki acknowledged Member Carol Esperti who responded to David Gibbs that the special meeting request was made via the telephone, and therefore, there are no emails to produce.

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of the 1050th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on December 16, 2002 – Approved by consensus.

B. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on December 16, 2002 – approved by consensus, to be released when the matter has been concluded.

C. Approval of 245th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on December 30, 2002 – approved by consensus.

Chairman John Rokicki reported that the minutes for the Executive Session on December 30, 2002 have not been completed.

III. Clarifications relating to Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement

A. Presentation of Warrants and Payroll

Warrants were circulated for signature.

IV. Communications

The Superintendent distributed copies of recent correspondence from District Counsel Leo McCabe regarding the Town of Holden vs WRSD, et al:

- Correspondence from District Counsel Leo McCabe, dated January 7, 2003 (attachment 5);
- Correspondence from Assistant Attorney General Anthony Penski, dated January 3, 2003 to the Worcester Superior Court (attachment 6);
- Department of Education's Memorandum in Opposition to Town of Holden's Motion for Summary Judgment (attachment 7);
- Department of Education's Statement of Facts and Statement of Legal Elements (attachment 8).

V. Committee Reports

- A. Student Advisory Committee (K. Brunelle, L. Zambetti, N. Leger, E. DeMarco)

The Student Advisors reported that members of the high school student council participated in the regional middle school student council meeting. A vote was taken by the regional middle school council that the councils would like to delay MCAS as a graduation requirement until 2009.

- B. Management Subcommittee (J. Rokicki, Chair, D. Leith, C. Esperti, P. Gates, A. Livdahl, K. Maxwell, N. Mello, J. Scott)

Chairman Rokicki announced that he had appointed Member Patricia Gates to the Management Subcommittee.

The Management Subcommittee met prior to the meeting and voted to recommend to the full Committee an amendment to the School Committee By-Laws (attachment 9). Fourteen-day notice was hereby given to the School Committee and will be placed on the agenda at the January 27, 2003 meeting.

Many agenda items were not addressed and will remain on the agenda for the next meeting, scheduled for Monday, January 27, 2003, at 6:00 PM in the Side Room of the Media Center at the high school.

- C. Business/Finance Subcommittee (N. Mello, J. Rokicki, D. Leith, D. Benson, D. Fedeli)
- D. Business-related Ad-Hoc Subcommittees
- E. School Building Committees requiring the action of the School Committee
 - 1. Holden – (J. Scott)
 - 2. Paxton
 - 3. Rutland
 - a. Central Tree/Naquag – (J. Rokicki)
 - b. Elementary – (J. Rokicki)

Chairman Rokicki reported that once the Town of Rutland appoints its Building Committee, John Nunnari will be appointed as the School Committee representative.

- 4. Sterling
- 5. High School

The paperwork is being compiled to initiate the borrowing. The Superintendent reported that he had just received a fax from Strekalovsky & Hoit, which showed the payment schedule. He indicated that he would share this fax with the Committee in the next report.

Requests for Proposals are being sent out for a Construction Manager.

A letter is being sent from the Superintendent to School Building Assistance at the Department of Education regarding the procedures for inclusion of the modulars in the high school renovation/addition project, per the previous direction of the Commissioner of Education at a January 2002 meeting with the Holden Selectboard.

Following inquiry by a member, the Superintendent reported that Principal Thomas Pandiscio notified NEASC of the positive vote for the high school project. He also reported that the high school is in the midst of a NEASC review, a process that involves every teacher and is more qualitative and thorough than previous reviews.

Member Duncan Leith reported that the Holden representatives have been invited to a joint meeting of the Holden Selectboard and Finance Committee regarding the method of financing for the high school project. The Superintendent reported that he thought that it was presumptive to expect the current Committee to make a decision for a future Committee. The Superintendent has requested the Comptroller attend the meeting as his designee.

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of report

A question was raised regarding the balance of the Excess & Deficiency (E&D) Funds. It was noted in the Comptroller's report that \$200,000 was transferred out of E&D in anticipation of a positive vote of the five member towns for the high school project. The Superintendent explained that this amount would be returned to E&D once money was received as a result of borrowing for the high school project. The Superintendent cautioned the Committee that other financial concerns of the District may have to be handled with transfers from E&D, like the \$225,000 request further in the meeting for transportation.

A question was raised regarding an attachment to the Comptroller's report, regarding compliance by the District in spending the required amounts on professional development. The Superintendent reported that there will be no problem spending the required amount by the end of the year, as it is prescribed by law.

A question was raised regarding SPED tuition reimbursements. The Superintendent reported that E&D funds could be used to offset this year's last quarter SPED tuition, although District staff

is reviewing other ways to make up the shortfall. The state is supposed to replenish the E&D next year but the likelihood of that happening is not good since it come out of the pool of funds that the DOE would have used for FY04 Chapter 70 aid. The Superintendent expressed concern that the state establishes criteria and procedures and then fails to live up to its commitment to pay its share. It is the Department of Education which sets the tuition rates at the out-of-district schools and the DOE continues to raise these rates at an alarming rate. The Superintendent affirmed that the service will not be affected but only who will have to pay the bill for the service.

The Superintendent, with the permission of the Chair, discussed briefly the budget concerns before Massachusetts. It is with anxiety that the Superintendent awaits Governor Romney's proposed budget cuts. To date the Governor has indicated that cuts will be made to aid to cities and towns and to higher education; Chapter 70 funds appear to have been left out of the discussion, as education remains a priority to the Governor. However, he is still concerned that Chapter 70 reductions might be imbedded in local aid.

The Superintendent reported that less than 5% of the District's budget is on discretionary items like books and supplies; a major portion of the District's budget is personnel and controlled spending. Controlled spending includes such items as personnel, special education and professional development. (The District is required to spend \$125 per student on professional development.) The Superintendent's hope is that if cuts are made to the budget, that mandates are reduced as well.

The Superintendent noted that he had shared with the Committee information regarding *No Child Left Behind*, a law which provides new requirements, more mandates, and no funding. The District will need to focus on additional data collection in order to be in compliance. This law is focused on particular districts not in compliance but the affects of the bill will be felt by all districts.

In addition, the new regulations regarding Title IX will impact the high school project. No longer does Title IX only require equal participation of males and females in athletics, but also applies to facilities as well. If lights are provided for boys

football, then lights need to be provided for a girls sport as well. A lot of energy will be lost planning for these type of requirements along with redirecting resources.

The Superintendent reported that Chapter 70 aid to the District for FY03 was the same as FY02, which in financial terms was a cut in funding. Governor Romney has predicted that a 10% cut will be made to Chapter 70 funds for FY04. The Superintendent is meeting with District staff to begin the budget process. His recommendation to the School Committee will not include a reduction of staff in schools. The worst educational plan to save money is to increase the number of students in a classroom.

Philip Campbell was congratulated as the Administrator of Special Education.

Following inquiry from a member regarding the newly legislated School Committee orientation, the Superintendent reported that information will be forthcoming as soon as the Superintendent is notified of the training sessions.

Chairman John Rokicki recessed the meeting at 8:05 PM to convene the Special Meeting.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:57 PM.

- B. Recommendations requiring action by the School Committee
 - 1. Motion: To appropriate \$225,000 from Excess & Deficiency to Transportation (attachment 10)
(P. MacDonald)
(J. Scott)

The Superintendent reminded the Committee that the budget was reduced, the ride-for-fee program and related bus reductions was not implemented because the School Committee desired to maintain status quo in transportation for FY03.

Member Patricia Gates left the meeting at 9:00 PM.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Clifford Connell

(Motion passed 15-0-1)

2. Appointment and Charge – High School Building Committee (attachment 11)

With the consensus of the Committee, Chairman Rokicki referred this to Business/Finance Subcommittee.

3. Motion: To enter executive session, at the end of the meeting, not to return to public sessions, for the Purpose of discussing strategies for negotiations

(C. Esperti)

(P. Young)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson

Clifford Connell
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

(Motion passed unanimously)

The Superintendent invited any new members to the Madrigal Dinner on Thursday evening, January 30, 2003. Members are requested to contact the Superintendent.

Member Patricia Gates returned to the meeting at 9:07 PM.

VII. Public Hearing

No member of the public wished to speak.

VIII. Unfinished Business

- A. Motion: To adopt AP6617 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services Administration of Medication** for the second reading, waiving the reading

(C. Esperti)
(P. MacDonald)

Following some questions from Members, the Superintendent reported that the nurses voted unanimously during negotiations to participate in medication delegation. The District has never asked for medication delegation with psychotropic drugs even though the Department of Public Health allowed it.

He further informed the Committee that the doctor, the parent, and the school nurse must all approve before self-medication takes place.

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Clifford Connell
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Patricia Gates
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 16-0-1)

- B. Motion: To adopt AP6910 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Student Records for the second reading, waiving the reading
(J. Scott)
(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Clifford Connell
Carol Esperti

David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Patricia Gates
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

- C. Motion: To delete AP6911 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services Access** for the second reading, waiving the reading
(J. Scott)
(D. Leith)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Clifford Connell
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Patricia Gates
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

- D. Motion: To adopt AP5241.12 **Policy Relating to Personnel Management *Criminal Record Check*** for the second reading, waiving the reading, adding “(CORI)” in the title of the policy.
(J. Scott)
(P. MacDonald)

The Superintendent reported that a new law was enacted in November 2002 that anyone who could be alone with a student must have a criminal record check performed at least every three years, that includes all school employees and just about all school volunteers.

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Clifford Connell
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Patricia Gates
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

IX. New Business

- A. Consideration by School Committee to move ahead if debt exclusions are not successful in member towns.

Motion: That the School Committee adopt a formal position in the form of a written statement to the member towns clearly and unambiguously stating that the high school project will be halted if the debt exclusion vote fails in any town required to vote on it so the voters know the full outcome of their vote.

(C. Connell)

(C. Esperti)

The Superintendent informed the Committee that this motion would result in all forward action being halted until such time as the last town has had a successful debt exclusion vote, should this motion be successful. Further, the Superintendent affirmed that this would undo the will of the voters at the Special Town Meetings in the Member Towns. He recognized the devastation that would befall a town if the debt exclusion was unsuccessful but indicated that the issue was discussed prior to School Committee approval of the high school warrant articles and that the project should not be halted because of it. The Superintendent requested that the motion be withdrawn.

Member Carol Esperti indicated that she would be willing to withdraw her second to the motion if Member Clifford Connell would agree to withdraw the motion. Member Connell declined.

Motion: To table

(K. Maxwell)

(T. Tod)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

David Fedeli
Alice Livdahl
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Patricia Young

Opposed:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Clifford Connell
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Patricia Gates
Jane James
Peter MacDonald
Margaret Watson

(Motion failed 7 – 10)

Roll call vote on the main motion: That the School Committee adopt a formal position in the form of a written statement to the member towns clearly and unambiguously stating that the high school project will be halted if the debt exclusion vote fails in any town required to vote on it so the voters know the full outcome of their vote.

In favor:

Clifford Connell

Opposed:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Patricia Gates
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

(Motion failed 1 – 16)

Member Margaret Watson distributed copies of DP1170 **Policy Relating to School Committee Operation Use of *Electronic Messaging By School Committee Members***, a draft policy distributed to the School Committee in May 2002 (attachment 12).

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

ADT:ss/School Committee/Minutes