

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1052, Monday, January 27, 2003  
7:00 p.m.

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

John Rokicki, Chairman	Kelly Maxwell
Duncan Leith, Vice-Chairman	Natalie Mello
Clifford Connell	John Nunnari
Kimberly Ferguson	Julie Scott
Patricia Gates	Tammy Tod
Jeffrey Gibbs	Margaret Watson
Alice Livdahl	Patricia Young
Peter MacDonald	

*Committee Members Absent:*

Donald Benson	David Fedeli
Carol Esperti	Jane James

*Administration Present:*

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

*Others Present:*

Linda Lehans, *The Landmark*  
Marc Sanguinetti, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*  
Sue Staudaher, *Sterling Meetinghouse News*  
Maureen Floryan, Holden  
Larry Floryan, Holden  
David Gibbs, Sterling  
Susan Sedgewick, Holden  
Cynthia Janik, Holden

Chairman John Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM.

With the indulgence of the Committee, Chairman Rokicki called upon the Superintendent for agenda item VIB *Presentation on Accreditation Process* out of order. The Superintendent introduced Wachusett Regional High School Principal Thomas Pandiscio who described the process for accreditation review by New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Principal Pandiscio distributed information regarding the process (attachment 1). NEASC is most interested in collective learning environment, based on a mission, which drives everything about the school.

The process began with extensive surveying of staff, students, and community for each standard of the NEASC:

- Mission and Expectations for Student Learning
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment of Student Learning
- Leadership and Organization
- School Resources for Learning
- Community Resources for Learning

Principal Pandiscio explained that a visiting team will begin on a Sunday to begin the review process and will not be finished until Wednesday late afternoon. He explained that he had been on visiting teams himself and therefore knows what to expect. The focus of the visiting team is on standards. Wachusett will have difficulty with the condition of the facility, as well as the new focus on missions and standards. This is not a free process; the District must house and feed the visiting team plus membership costs. The estimated cost is \$15,000. There are benefits to the school because staff works cross departmentally. The Superintendent reminded the Committee that Dr. Pamela Gray-Bennett from NEASC, in her presentation to the Committee on July 10, 2000 indicated that the high school's accreditation will remain at the probation stage until such time as all facility issues were corrected.

Chairman John Rokicki opened up the discussion to Committee members for questions. The self-study will be completed by the end of school year and when sent to the Superintendent, the Superintendent will share the copies with the Committee. Some School Committee members will also be included in the interview process with the visiting team. Principal Pandiscio was not certain how the members would be chosen. One-year, two-year, five-year updates are provided to NEASC. Wachusett has had to update more often due to the status of probation. Following an inquiry, Principal Pandiscio explained that portfolios are being used more and more to aid teachers in assessing students.

I. Public Hearing

Maureen Floryan, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 2).

David Gibbs, Sterling, read a prepared statement (attachment 3).

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of the 1051<sup>st</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on January 13, 2003 – approved by consensus

When asked BY MEMBER KIMBERLY FERGUSON, Chairman John Rokicki reported that the Executive Session Minutes of December 30, 2002 will be provided in the next Superintendent's report.

- B. Approval of the 246<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on January 13, 2003 – approved by consensus, correcting the spelling of "breach" on page 4.

- C. Approval of the Executive Session of the WRSD Committee held on January 13, 2003 – approved by consensus and released to the public

III. Communications

IV. Education Presentation

V. Committee Reports

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

The second semester started today, following a week of mid-term examinations. In reference to NEASC, fourteen student council members participated in the fall at a meeting regarding the NEASC review. The Student Council is continuing to work with the school throughout the process. The girls basketball team continues to excel.

- B. Education Subcommittee (J. Scott, Chair, K. Ferguson, P. MacDonald, J. Nunnari, T. Tod, M. Watson, P. Young)

The next Education Subcommittee meeting will be February 3, 2003, at 6:30 PM in the Curriculum Center at the District Central Office.

- C. School Council Reports: Central Tree Middle School (J. Nunnari), Chocksett Middle School (P. MacDonald), Davis Hill Elementary School (D. Leith), Dawson Elementary School (J. James), Houghton Elementary School, Mayo Elementary School (M. Watson), Mountview Middle School (D. Benson), Naquag Elementary School (J. Gibbs), Paxton Center School (A. Livdahl), Thomas Prince School, and Wachusett Regional High School (N. Mello)

Chairman Rokicki asked the two new Princeton representatives to notify him if either would be willing to serve as the Committee liaison to the Thomas Prince's School Council. Member Patricia Gates indicated that she would serve in that function because she already goes to the meetings.

Member Natalie Mello reported on the WRHS council, which focused on NEASC and the high school long-term project.

Member Alice Livdahl reported on the Paxton Center School Council. There was considerable discussion regarding the expansion of the CORI policy. The Council reviewed a survey of parents and also discussed gender-based achievement.

Member Patricia Gates reported as a former parent representative to Thomas Prince's SIAM Council. The Council is working on the School Improvement Plan and wants to survey parents.

## VI. Superintendent's Report

### A. Discussion of Report

The Superintendent reported on the Holden vs District et al court case. The hearing took place last Wednesday, was forty minutes in length and discussed issues previously submitted to the Court and shared with the Committee. No timeline was given as to the issuance of a decision.

Representative Lewis Evangelidis hosted a meeting with Lieutenant Governor Kerry Murphy Healey and representatives from Holden, Princeton, Sterling, Rutland, Westminster, and Hubbardston today in Holden. The Superintendent reported that suggestions were made to the Lieutenant Governor on ways the Governor could implement budget reductions to cities and towns: health insurance (possible state plan); transportation (increase in special education, 20% reduction in reimbursement), lack of control of special education costs.

The Superintendent reported that at least short-term, Chapter 70 aid will not be reduced for FY03. Reductions will probably be made to transportation reimbursement and grants. On the positive side, November revenues were up slightly from projections.

FY04 budget reductions to Chapter 70 aid are estimated at 10%; with transportation reimbursement, estimated at an additional 20% reduction. State grants will also be affected.

Following an inquiry, the Superintendent reported that the District does not maintain records on participation in athletics but does not believe that there were any significant reductions due to the increased athletic fee.

B. Presentation on Accreditation Process

See above.

VII. Public Hearing

No member of the public wished to speak.

VIII. Unfinished Business

A. Proposed By-Law Change, as recommended by Management Subcommittee

Motion: To approve the School Committee By-Laws, as recommended by the Management Subcommittee (attachment 4)

(J. Scott)

(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Patricia Gates  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed

Clifford Connell  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Peter MacDonald  
Kelly Maxwell  
Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 10-5)

- B. The Superintendent reported that the School Committee and the WREA have settled the three-year contract. The only other negotiation still going on is with the nurses union.

IX. New Business

- A. Chairman John Rokicki read a statement into the record, an apology to the Superintendent (attachment 5).
- B. Member Clifford Connell read for the record from Chapter 4, Section 9 *Public Session* of **Robert's Rules of Order**:

*In meetings of many public bodies, such as school boards, the public may attend. Similarly, in some private organizations such as church councils, parishioners may be permitted to attend. These attendees are not members of the meeting body and ordinarily have no right to participate. Some bodies, especially public ones, may invite non-members to express their views, but this is done under the control of the presiding officer subject to any relevant rules adopted by the body and subject to appeal by*

*a member. Often, by rule or practice, time limits are placed on speakers and relevance is closely monitored.*

- C. Motion: That the Management Subcommittee of the Wachusett Regional School Committee (WRSC) be directed to develop a policy regarding the use of electronic messaging by WRSC members and that the proposed policy be duly submitted to the WRSC for consideration and action (attachment 6).  
(M. Watson)

Member Margaret Watson referred to attachment 12 of the Minutes of January 13, 2003 and thought the Committee should consider such a policy (attachment 7).

Chairman John Rokicki indicated that he would refer this to Management Subcommittee for discussion and development of a policy, should Member Watson wish to withdraw the motion. Member Margaret Watson withdrew her motion.

- D. Motion: To enter executive session, at the end of the meeting, not to return to public session, to discuss contractual negotiations with non-union personnel  
(D. Leith)  
(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Clifford Connell  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Patricia Gates  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Alice Livdahl  
Peter MacDonald  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

E. Discussion occurred regarding public sessions.

X. Adjournment

Chairman Rokicki called a five minutes recess before starting the executive session. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

ADT:ss

ADT:ss/schoolcommittee/minutes