

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1054, Monday, February 24, 2003  
7:00 p.m.

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

John Rokicki, Chairman	Alice Livdahl
Duncan Leith, Vice-Chairman (7:07 PM)	Peter MacDonald (7:06 PM)
Donald Benson	Kelly Maxwell
Charles Capparelli	Natalie Mello
Clifford Connell	John Nunnari
Carol Esperti	Julie Scott
Kimberly Ferguson	Tammy Tod (7:04 PM)
Patricia Gates	Margaret Watson
Jane James	Patricia Young

*Committee Members Absent:*

David Fedeli	Jeffrey Gibbs
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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  
Thomas Pandiscio, Principal, Wachusett Regional High School  
Susan H. Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

*Others Present:*

Kelley Nosel, Curriculum Supervisor  
Linda Lehans, *The Landmark*  
Marc Sanguinetti, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*  
Susan Staudaer, *Sterling Meetinghouse News*  
Lewis Evangelidis, State Representative  
Joseph Sullivan, Chair, Holden Selectboard  
Douglas Briggs, Chair, Rutland Selectboard  
Joseph Giotta, Chair, Holden Finance Committee

Roger Hoit, Strekalovsky & Hoit, Inc.  
Larry Floryan, Holden  
Maureen Floryan, Holden  
David Gibbs, Sterling  
Mark James, Holden  
Debra Lee Muzzey Stone, Hudson  
Pamela Muzzey Dorazio, Holden

Chairman John Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Before the Public Hearing, Chairman Rokicki introduced Lewis Evangelidis, State Representative, to join the Committee at the table for an update on the high school reimbursement.

Representative Evangelidis informed the Committee that the Senate had unanimously adopted the amendment, which would place Wachusett and Rutland School projects on the state reimbursement list, and it then went to a Joint Conference Committee. The Joint Conference Committee announced today that the amendment was expanded in the Joint Committee to include all projects with voter approval, which have met all Department of Education deadlines, to June 30, 2003. The Senate and House will vote on the compromise bill probably Tuesday, February 25, 2003, and then it will go to the Governor for signature. There is no indication, one way or the other, what the Governor will do. Representative Evangelidis indicated that in his dealings with the Governor, if an idea were fair he would consider it.

Representative Evangelidis also reported that he did not have any further insight as to the timing of reimbursement, should this amendment be successful. Only nineteen projects began to be reimbursed last year. ~~Representative Evangelidis distributed a copy of correspondence from he and other legislators to members of the Conference Committee encouraging the inclusion of the amendment in the final bill.~~ REPRESENTATIVE EVANGELIDIS DISTRIBUTED A COPY OF CORRESPONDENCE FROM SEVERAL LEGISLATORS TO MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ENCOURAGING THE INCLUSION OF THE AMENDMENT IN THE FINAL BILL (attachment 1). Representative Evangelidis also distributed copies of addresses for Governor Mitt Romney and Secretary Peter Nessen and encouraged School Committee Members and members of the public to contact the Governor and Secretary to request passage of the amendment (attachment 2).

Chairman John Rokicki conducted a question and answer period for Committee members and Representative Evangelidis. Following an inquiry Representative Evangelidis reminded the Committee that there were three hundred fifty projects on the list from this past year. The high school project will be fairly high in the new batch of projects because of the possibility of losing accreditation. The

Superintendent noted that once the documentation has all been submitted to the Department of Education, the project would most likely be even higher on the list due to overcrowding.

When asked about the timeline for borrowing, Representative Evangelidis repeated that he has no guarantee as to when reimbursement would begin and that possibly either the length of short-term borrowing could be extended and/or the total length of borrowing could be extended. Representative Evangelidis recognized that there could be some years with financial problems but that if the amendment is successful the project is essentially at the same point as it was when it was voted by the citizens of the District last November and December.

The Superintendent reminded the Committee that the responsibility for deciding on the short-term borrowing is the responsibility of the School Committee.

Following an inquiry regarding the timeline of the passage of the bill, Representative Evangelidis reported that the House and Senate would act by Wednesday; the bill would go to the Governor for signature; the Governor has ten days to either sign or veto the bill, in its entirety or line item by line item. Representative Evangelidis was not sure of the number of days the legislature would have to overturn a veto.

Representative Evangelidis explained, following an inquiry regarding the timing of the moratorium, that there would be no savings for the current fiscal year but that the Governor would like to revamp the program and a moratorium would give him the time to accomplish that.

#### I. Public Hearing

Deborah Muzzy Stone, Hudson, spoke to the Committee regarding Project Recognition, which provides diplomas for World War II veterans. She distributed information regarding this program to Committee Members and the public (attachment 3). She urged the School Committee to act and adopt this program.

Mark James, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 4).

Maureen Floryan, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 5).

David Gibbs, Sterling, read a prepared statement (attachment 6).

Joseph Sullivan, Chair, Holden Selectboard, reported that the concerns being expressed to members of the Holden Selectboard concern the

misguided notion that the School Committee would proceed with the entire \$70 million project without reimbursement. He encouraged the Committee to ease the concern of the community regarding this.

Joseph Giotta, Chair, Holden Finance Committee, expressed concern regarding the architectural fees incurred before the passage of the amendment. The Superintendent assured Mr. Giotta that confirmation had been received from Jeffrey Wulfson, Assistant Commissioner in charge of School Building Assistance in correspondence to Senator Harriette Chandler. The Superintendent provided Mr. Giotta with a copy of the correspondence for his information.

## II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of the 1053<sup>rd</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on February 10, 2003 – approved by consensus, with changes on page 3, Item VB, paragraph 2, add “in her absence” after “issues”; add “of a personal nature regarding individual committee members” instead of “concerning them;”, and add “requested it be done as a courtesy to members” instead of “thought that it was just common courtesy”.
- B. Approval of the 247<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on February 12, 2003 – approved by consensus, with changes on page 2, Item I, add “in his opinion” following “restated that”.

## III. Communications

In reference to a letter to members from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Member Carol Esperti asked that the issue be referred to Management Subcommittee. Chairman John Rokicki reported that he had crafted a response. Following a brief discussion, Chairman Rokicki referred the matter to the Management Subcommittee.

The Superintendent reminded the Committee that he voluntarily serves as secretary and takes the minutes and that he has maintained past practice as it relates to recording of attendees at the meeting. The Committee has the authority to determine by its By-Laws how the members of the public would be recorded in the minutes, should the Committee want to change the current practice.

#### IV. Education Presentation

The Superintendent introduced Kelley Nosel, Curriculum Supervisor, who reviewed the School Report Card that will be sent to each parent, as a requirement of No Child Left Behind (attachment 7). By April 1<sup>st</sup> each school must report to parents on the school's performance on the MCAS. There are certain requirements of the School Report Card along with some options for the individual schools, including space for a mission statement.

#### V. Committee Reports

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

The Student Advisory Representatives reported that students have been working with the high school staff on requirements for the NEASC accreditation review. Students have developed an acronym PRIDE, but the students were not sure what each of the letters stood for.

Student Council members are participating in the Middle School Career Day and have enjoyed working with the middle school students.

The Superintendent reported that some student representatives will be meeting tomorrow with the Superintendent and the architect to provide input into the design of the high school.

The students reported that the hockey, girls basketball and boys basketball teams have reached the Districts. Also it was noted that the girls track and cheerleaders have excelled lately in competitions.

For the record, Member Margaret Watson read a prepared statement complimenting students for the Madrigal Dinner (attachment 8).

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

Education Subcommittee Chair Julie Scott reported that the Education Subcommittee had met on February 3, 2003, where a

review by District staff on the education specifications for the high school was held. The next meeting of the Education Subcommittee will be Monday, March 3, 2003, at 6:00 PM in the side room of the Media Center at the high school for the purpose of reviewing education policies. Members of the Education Subcommittee were reminded that they should be prepared with any policies needing revision. Also on the agenda will be consideration of Project Recognition. The Superintendent suggested including Korean War veterans as well as World War II veterans.

- 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 (P. Gates), and Wachusett Regional High School (N. Mello)

Member Margaret Watson reported that the Mayo Elementary School Council is preparing a survey for parental satisfaction. Member Watson reviewed with the Council possible FY04 scenarios and suggested to the Council that input could be brought forward to her via telephone or email.

The Superintendent reported that Naquag Elementary School recently put on a *Strands Fair*, which the Superintendent reported was outstanding with the hallways and classrooms covered with student work. Also mentioned was Dawson's Continents Month.

## VI. Superintendent's Report

### A. Discussion of Report

Following inquiry, the Superintendent reported that there are few complaints regarding transportation but that complaints do increase slightly in the winter months.

The Superintendent reported that the Governor's budget will be announced on Wednesday, February 26, 2003. The Superintendent will be looking closely at changes in Chapter 70

aid, both in the amount of reduction and possible changes in formula. Chapter 71, transportation reimbursement, will also be watched carefully as it is rumored to being reduced substantially.

Following inquiry, the Superintendent reported that he had not received a copy of the complaint about him made by Princeton officials and residents but received a copy of the correspondence from the Assistant District Attorney as a courtesy from Mary Anne Magiera of the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*.

B. Presentation on School and District Report Cards

See above.

C. Adoption of 2003-2004 School Calendar

Motion: To adopt the 2003-2004 School Calendar, as recommended by the Superintendent (attachment 9)  
(C. Esperti)  
(P. MacDonald)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

D. Adoption of Education Specifications for High School Project

The Superintendent introduced Roger Hoit, Strekalovsky & Hoit, Inc. and Wachusett Regional High School Principal Thomas Pandiscio and asked them to join the members of the Committee at table for discussion regarding the education specifications for the high school project.

Chairman John Rokicki left the meeting at 8:55 PM. Vice-Chairman Duncan Leith took over the meeting.

Motion: To adopt the Education Specifications for High School, as recommended by the Superintendent (attachment 10)

(J. Scott)

(J. Nunnari)

Principal Pandiscio explained the rationale of the two-school approach proposed for the high school project. Because of delays in the approval of the project, the development of these specifications has been a long, deliberative process, garnering input from administration and staff.

Chairman Rokicki returned to the meeting at 8:58 PM.

Principal Pandiscio explained that the program is a purposeful compromise between the large comprehensive, departmentalized program and small high schools. Roger Hoit reflected on the meetings with staff at the high school, commenting on the excitement at the high school. He reported that he is looking forward to meeting with the students tomorrow. The current building will be gutted and redesigned and will not be recognizable. Roger Hoit reported that once documentation is complete the high school would most likely be in the enrollment category for reimbursement, due to overcrowding.

Following inquiry, Roger Hoit reported that he did not think that the design criteria would be changed by the Department of



Education, for those projects on the list. The Superintendent reported, however, that one change being considered for the future is to have standard designs of schools to be chosen by school committees.

When asked about the input from the students, Principal Pandiscio responded that he had judiciously kept the students out of the process so as not to be accused on “politicking” the students. Now District staff is trying to do a bit of catch up.

When asked, Principal Pandiscio reported that the house system will be more nurturing and with teachers sharing the same students, perhaps more students will not “fall between the cracks”.

Roger Hoit reported that he had seen a slight reduction in construction costs due to lack of projects. This is a very good time to bid and get the work done.

The Superintendent reminded the Committee that next year would have been Phase II of the modulars, which included a substantial increase in physical education space due to the insufficient space for the program. The education specifications reflect the need for an increase in space as well as improved space.

The Superintendent explained that the project is \$70,500,000 and the educational specifications provide the program, within that scope. The Black Box Theater provides a new small theater for alternative drama for the students and it could also be used as an additional meeting room.

Chairman John Rokicki ended debate.

Motion: To over-ride the Chair and allow two minutes more of debate.

(C. Connell)  
(C. Esperti)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith

Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Patricia Gates  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Peter MacDonald  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Roll call vote on motion: To adopt the Education Specifications  
for High School

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Patricia Gates  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
Clifford Connell

Carol Esperti  
Peter MacDonald

(Motion passed 15-3)

Motion: To extend the meeting for thirty minutes  
(D. Leith)  
(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member Kelly Maxwell left the meeting at 10:05 PM.

Member Peter MacDonald left the meeting at 10:07 PM.

E. Adoption of Education Specifications for Rutland Elementary School Project

Motion: To adopt the Education Specifications for Rutland Elementary School Project, as recommended by the Superintendent (attachment 11)

(D. Leith)

(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Patricia Gates  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

F. **DP5241.6 Policy Relating to Personnel Management *Staff Participation in Political and Union Activities***

Chairman John Rokicki referred the policy to the Management Subcommittee.

G. **DP7114 Policy Relating to Support Operations *Use of School Facilities for Telecommunications Equipment***

Chairman John Rokicki referred the policy to the  
Business/Finance Subcommittee.

Member Kimberly Ferguson left the meeting at 10:15 PM.

H. Executive Session to Discuss Strategies for Collective  
Bargaining

Motion: To enter executive session, at the end of the meeting,  
not to return to public session, to discuss strategies for collective  
bargaining

(C. Esperti)  
(D. Leith)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
Patricia Gates  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Donald Benson  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Patricia Young

(Motion passed 9-6)

VII. Public Hearing

No member of the public wished to speak.

## VIII. Unfinished Business

Chairman John Rokicki distributed copies of Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on December 30, 2002, and of Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on January 27, 2003 (attachments 12 and 13 – not available to the public until released).

- A. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on December 30, 2002 – accepted by consensus but not released to the public until the other party agrees that the issue is settled.
- B. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on January 27, 2003 – accepted by consensus but not released to the public until the other party agrees that the issue is settled.
- C. Tabled Motion, as Amended: To adopt the following charge to the High School Building Committee:

The Wachusett Regional School Committee advises the Chair to use the following guidelines in establishing the charge to the High School Building Committee:

Operation of High School Building Committee:

- The commitment is long-term, for the duration of the project.
- The High School Building Committee will function within the School Committee By-laws and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Open Meeting Laws include the posting of all meetings.
- Minutes of all meetings will be recorded and an official copy of the minutes will be kept at the Superintendent's office.
- The High School Building Committee will allow for public input at all meetings.
- Architectural design is adopted by the School Committee, with recommendation from the High School Building Committee.

Objectives:

- The project shall be completed on time and within budget and shall:
  - Maximize funds for furnishings/equipment to provide funds for actual facility.
  - Maximize the use of existing furniture/equipment purchased last few years.
  - Maximize the use of the existing security system, installed in FY03.
  - Maximize the use of the existing fire alarm system, updated in FY03.
  - Maximize use of modular space and minimize school disruption to the educational program, staff, and students during construction.

#### Project Design:

- Education Specifications are adopted by the School Committee and include a two school design:
  - Upper School – Grades 11 and 12
  - Lower School – Grades 9 and 10
- Divided into two houses, each containing both ninth and tenth grade
  - Approximately 500 students per house
- The design of the project should be centered around the learning of students.
- Administrative/support/service units will be placed throughout the building, organized close to students being serviced, provide sufficient units for staff, and will be designed to be used as permanent staff planning areas in order that classrooms can be used by multiple teachers in the future, if necessary.
- The design of the project should incorporate dual energy sources to minimize energy costs and should be zone controlled.
- The design of the project shall include technology with a vision towards the future, with consideration being given to replacement life and maintenance in order to have the least impact on the District's operating budget.
- The design of the project shall incorporate both indoor and outdoor athletic facilities, allowing for flexibility in programming for physical education classes, address a variety of intra/inter scholastic opportunities, include an indoor track,

and should include indoor practice facilities for as many sports as possible, as well as community use.

- The design of the project shall include an auditorium with a capacity of at least 800 students with sufficient staging, the capability to operate full high school and community productions, as well as staging for an orchestra.
- The design of the project shall include adequate music facilities, focused on student learning to cover diverse curriculum opportunities at various performance levels.
- The design of the project shall include adequate art facilities, focused on student learning to cover diverse curriculum opportunities at various performance levels, on studio approach.
- The design of the project shall include adequate drama facilities to handle a variety of different theater applications, have a capability for black theater, and be focused on student learning to cover diverse curriculum opportunities at various performance levels.
- The design of the project shall include community access, providing separate access and control to the auditorium and gymnasium and should include community access to the cafeteria, if feasible.
- The design of the project shall be flexible, being able to adapt to changing educational programs in future years.
- The project must meet all federal and state requirements, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The design of the project shall include a media center of sufficient size to ensure appropriate support of instructional delivery of the curriculum and to provide space for students' individual research and inquiry.

Motion: To remove the motion from the table, the Charge to the High School Building Committee.

(N. Mello)  
(D. Benson)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli



Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
Patricia Gates  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

It was noted that there was a minor typographical error in the motion: under Project Design, the second and third bullets should have been indented.

Roll call vote on the main motion:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Patricia Gates  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
Carol Esperti

(Motion passed 14 - 1)

- D. Tabled Motion, as Amended: To cease action on the high school long-term facility solution at this time until the District affirms reimbursement, with the exception of the land purchase and with the exception of limiting the borrowing to \$3.2 million to pay for land and the architects until the June submission.

The Superintendent reminded the Committee that if no action were taken on this tabled motion, the entire cost of the architect would have to be borrowed in order to certify the funds.

Following discussion, no action was taken on the tabled motion.

IX. New Business

X. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn

(C. Esperti)  
(C. Capparelli)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
Patricia Gates  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

ADT:ss/School Committee/Minutes