

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1074, Monday, March 22, 2004
9:52 PM

Modular Cafeteria
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Duncan Leith, Chair	Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello, Vice-Chair	Norman Plourde
Donald Benson	René Rodriguez
Elizabeth Brennan	Julie Scott
Charles Capparelli	Michael Sherman
Clifford Connell	Tammy Tod
Patricia Gates	Margaret Watson
Mark James	Patricia Young
John Kane	

Committee Members Absent:

David Dickman	John Nunnari
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Administration Present:

Paul K. Soojian, Director of Operations
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services
Peter Brennan, Comptroller
Susan Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Others present, who desired to be recorded as present (see attached Attendance Sheet – attachment 1)

Chair Duncan Leith called the meeting to order at 9:52 PM.

Motion: To extend the meeting by one hour

(J. Kane)
(M. James)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Natalie Mello
Donald Benson
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Norman Plourde
René Rodriguez
Julie Scott
Michael Sherman
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Chair Duncan Leith reported that he would address Item V C *Appropriation of SBAB funds in the amount of \$220,270 to the Town of Rutland for reimbursement for the renovation/addition at Naquag Elementary School* and Item V B *Approval of the Proposed FY05 Appropriation*, due to the late hour and since there were members of the public who had come to the meeting to offer input on the budget. Chair Leith reported that the Public Hearing for the regular portion of the School Committee meeting will take place following discussion and action regarding the budget.

- C. Appropriation of SBAB funds in the amount of \$220,270 to the Town of Rutland for reimbursement for the renovation/addition at Naquag Elementary School

Motion: To appropriate SBAB funds in the amount of \$220,270 to the Town of Rutland for reimbursement for the renovation/addition at Naquag Elementary School

(E. Brennan)

(T, Tod)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Natalie Mello
Donald Benson
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Norman Plourde
René Rodriguez
Julie Scott
Michael Sherman
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

B. Approval of the *Proposed FY05 Appropriation*

Chair Duncan Leith reported that the Management and Business/Finance Subcommittees recommended that the *Proposed FY05 Appropriation* be reduced by \$450,000. The Superintendent prepared two options for the School Committee to consider (attachment 2).

Motion: To accept the Management and Business/Finance Subcommittees' recommendations to reduce the *Proposed FY05 Appropriation* by \$450,000 by adopting Option B as presented by the Superintendent, a reduction of \$300,000 in *Salaries* and \$150,000 in *Instructional Support* for an *FY05 Appropriation* of \$55,019,705.

(N. Mello)

(M. Sherman)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello reported on the process followed to date. Subcommittee Chair Mello reported that the Member Towns have agreed not to provide historical data. Subcommittee

Chair Mello read Holden Selectboard Chair Michael Wronski's email to her regarding this decision by the Regional Selectboards (attachment 3).

Subcommittee Chair Mello reported that at the last meeting, there were no representatives from Rutland and that Sterling representatives reported that they had not reviewed the number being considered.

Following inquiry Director Soojian explained that the \$300,000 would not add additional staff. Thirteen positions proposed would not be hired. The proposed increases to staffing were to accommodate the increased enrollment at the high school, last year and this year and special education. This was being done to try and recoup some of the 52.72 positions that were reduced in FY04.

Director Soojian advised the Committee that the *Proposed FY05 Appropriation* does not restore late busses.

Chair Duncan Leith reminded the Committee that pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws adoption of the budget requires a two-thirds majority of the Committee or thirteen members to vote in the affirmative.

Roll call vote on the main motion:

In favor:

Natalie Mello
Donald Benson
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
Alice Livdahl
Julie Scott
Michael Sherman
Tammy Tod
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Duncan Leith
Mark James
John Kane
Norman Plourde
René Rodriguez
Margaret Watson

(Motion failed 11-6, two-thirds of members needed for approval)

Motion: To adopt the original *Proposed FY 05 Appropriation*
(M. James)
(N. Mello)

Motion: To move the question
(P. Gates)
(C. Capparelli)

Chair Duncan Leith did not recognize the motion as there were no Members who wished to speak further on the motion.

Roll call vote on the main motion:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Natalie Mello
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Mark James
John Kane
Norman Plourde
René Rodriguez
Tammy Tod
Patricia Young
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Donald Benson
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
Alice Livdahl
Julie Scott
Michael Sherman

(Motion failed 11-6, two-thirds of members needed for approval)

Motion: To send a letter to municipal Selectboards, FinComs and/or Town Advisory Boards of the District, the contents of which follows:

1. The school district committee expresses its desire that the district budget proposal and the municipal budget proposals be considered simultaneously at respective Town Meetings.
2. Further, to request of the towns that they postpone Town Meetings until such a time that the School district budget proposal is more

closely aligned with the respective town budget proposals in regard to the Regional Agreement Spending Assessment (RASA).

3. That the school committee respectfully requests a formal response to this letter with all due speed (attachment 4)

(M. James)

(M. Watson)

Member Mark James read a prepared statement in support of the motion (attachment 5).

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Patricia Gates
Mark James
John Kane
Norman Plourde
René Rodriguez
Patricia Young
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Natalie Mello
Donald Benson
Clifford Connell
Alice Livdahl
Julie Scott
Michael Sherman
Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 10-7)

Motion: To extend the meeting for thirty minutes

(N. Mello)

(J. Scott)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Natalie Mello
Donald Benson
Elizabeth Brennan

Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Norman Plourde
René Rodriguez
Julie Scott
Michael Sherman
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To adopt an *FY05 Appropriation* of \$55,169,705, reducing \$300,000 from *Salaries*

(N. Mello)
(M. James)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Natalie Mello
Donald Benson
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
René Rodriguez
Julie Scott
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Patricia Gates
Norman Plourde

Michael Sherman
Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 13-4)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello reported that the Business/Finance Subcommittee also voted to direct the administration to prepare an impact statement of a \$1.7 million reduction from the *Proposed FY05 Appropriation*.

Motion: To direct the District Administration to prepare an impact statement to operations should the *FY05 Appropriation* be set to an equivalent of a \$1.7 million reduction to the *Proposed FY05 Appropriation* in the Regional Agreement Spending Assessment and to request that said impact statement be prepared by April 12, 2004

(N. Mello)
(A. Livdahl)

Director Soojian reminded the Committee that, as discussed at the Business/Finance Subcommittee meetings as well as the School Committee meetings, the impacts would be developed in line with the priorities accepted by consensus by the School Committee at the School Committee Retreat.

Following inquiry, Chair Duncan Leith explained that if the School Committee adopted a lower revised FY05 Appropriation, the amount would be amended on Town Meeting floor.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Natalie Mello
Donald Benson
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Norman Plourde
René Rodriguez
Julie Scott
Michael Sherman

Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 16-1)
Chair Duncan Leith reported that all other items on the Agenda were deferred to the April 12, 2004 School Committee meeting.

Motion: To adjourn

(C. Capparelli)
(J. Scott)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Natalie Mello
Donald Benson
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Norman Plourde
René Rodriguez
Julie Scott
Michael Sherman
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

ADT:ss/School Committee/Minutes