

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1091, Monday April 11, 2005
7:00 PM

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Duncan Leith, Chair	Alice Livdahl
John Nunnari, Vice-chair	Mary Catherine Maher
Cynthia Bazinet	Kelly Maxwell
Elizabeth Brennan	Natalie Mello
Robert Carter	Phillip Mighdoll
Patricia Gates	Norman Plourde
David Gibbs	Michael Sherman
Mark James	Margaret Watson
John Kane	

Committee Members Absent:

Charles Capparelli	Cheryl Rauh
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Administration Present:

Paul K. Soojian, Deputy Superintendent and Director of Operations
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services
Rebecca Petersen, Administrative Assistant

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

Chair Duncan Leith called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

I. Public Hearing

Cindy Purcell, Rutland, addressed the School Committee regarding the request of *ABC 20/20 News* to file a segment in District schools.

Following her address to the School Committee, Chair Leith informed the Committee that he would allow School Committee Members to comment on the issue presented. Following a request by a Member,

Chair Leith agreed to allow the discussion before Ms. Purcell left the meeting.

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

Chair Leith opened the floor for discussion regarding the issue of filming in the schools. Member Patricia Gates noted that, on the record, she disagreed with the decision not allowing the filming of the program. Discussion continued, including suggestions that the issue could be discussed by either the Education Subcommittee or the Management Subcommittee.

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 1089th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on March 14, 2005 – approved by consensus, with Members Patricia Gates, Kelly Maxwell and Phillip Mighdoll abstaining.
- B. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on March 14, 2005 – approved by consensus with Members Alice Livdahl and Phillip Mighdoll abstaining.
- C. Approval of the Annual Budget Hearing of the WRSD Committee held on March 28, 2005 – approved by consensus, with Members Mary Catherine Maher and Kelly Maxwell abstaining.
- D. Approval of the 1090th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on March 28, 2005 – approved by consensus, with the following corrections:

On page 6, the motion PASSED 9 – 8.

On page 11, the motion to reconsider was made by Member Charles Capparelli.

Member Norman Plourde noted that attachment 4 of the minutes, *School Council Survey – Preliminary Results*, represented only input from some of the School Councils. A concern was expressed that the input from all School Councils should be included as part of the public record. Chair Leith concurred that a full listing of results should be part of the record. Member

David Gibbs reported that he would provide an updated list for the Committee.

- E. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on March 28, 2005.

No action was taken.

- F. Approval of 259th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on April 6, 2005.

Vice-Chair John Nunnari distributed copies of the minutes of the 259th Special Meeting of the WRSD Committee held on April 6, 2005 (attachment 3).

The minutes were approved by consensus with Members Patricia Gates, Alice Livdahl and Natalie Mello abstaining.

- G. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on April 6, 2005

Vice-Chair John Nunnari distributed copies of the minutes of the Executive Session of the WRSD Committee held on April 6, 2005 to members only.

The minutes were approved by consensus with Members Gates, Livdahl and Mello abstaining. Chair Leith informed the Committee that the minutes would not be released until the matter was concluded.

III. Treasurer's Report/Financial Statements

Chairman Duncan Leith reminded the Committee that if there were questions regarding the Comptroller's report that Members should contact the Deputy Superintendent and Director of Operations; if there were questions regarding the Treasurer's report, Members should contact Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello

IV. Committee Reports

- A. Chair's Opening Remarks

- B. Student Advisory Committee (C. Brennan, K. Getchell, J. Leger, C. Wilde)

Chair Leith noted that the four students who represent the Student Advisory Committee have not been attending School Committee meetings because of their busy schedules. Chair Leith will suggest that next year the Chair meet with the Student Advisory Committee Members, even if the students are unable to attend School Committee meetings.

- C. Management Subcommittee (D. Leith, Chair, J. Nunnari, Vice-chair, C. Capparelli, P. Gates, D. Gibbs, M. James, N. Mello, , M. Watson)

Chair Duncan Leith reported that Management Subcommittee met on Tuesday, March 22, 2005, and conducted the Superintendent's evaluation.

- D. Education Subcommittee (M. Watson, Chair, A. Livdahl, Vice-chair, C. Bazinet, E. Brennan, J. Nunnari, N. Plourde)

Education Subcommittee Chair Margaret Watson reported that the Education Subcommittee was scheduled to meet on Tuesday, April 5, 2005, but did not convene, due to a lack of quorum. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 25, 2005, at 5:30 PM, immediately prior to the regularly scheduled School Committee meeting in the Media Center at the high school. The Superintendent's Evaluation will be on the April 25, 2005 Education Subcommittee agenda.

1. Amend Policy P6433 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Substance Abuse – second reading

Motion: To amend the following policies for the second reading, waiving the reading:

Policy P6433 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Substance Abuse

Policy P6515 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services** ***Student Publications***

Policy P6562 Policy Relating to Pupil Services *Alternate Student Transportation*

Policy P6613.1 Policy Relating to Pupil Services *Eye Protection*

Policy P6616 Policy Relating to Pupil Services *Insurance*

Policy P6631 Policy Relating to Pupil Services *Non-Discrimination*

Policy P6650 Policy Relating to Pupil Services *Confidentiality*

Policy P6910 Policy Relating to Pupil Services *Student Records*

(M. Watson)

(E. Brennan)

A question was raised about the wording of the new language in Policy P6631 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services *Non-Discrimination***. Deputy Superintendent Soojian explained that the wording in the paragraph is language from the Office of Civil Rights. A grammatical correction was noted: line 4 after the word “policies” insert a semi-colon, delete the word “and,” replacing it with the word “further.” By consensus, this grammatical correction will be made.

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher

Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

2. Amend Policy P6515 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Student Publications – second reading

See above.
3. Amend Policy P6562 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Alternate Student Transportation – second reading

See above.
4. Amend Policy P6613.1 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Eye Protection – second reading

See above.
5. Amend Policy P6616 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Insurance – second reading

See above.
6. Amend Policy P6631 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Non-Discrimination – second reading

See above.
7. Amend Policy P6650 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Confidentiality – second reading

See above.

8. Amend Policy P6910 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Student Records – second reading

See above.

9. Delete Policy P6160 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services**
Post-Graduate Students – second reading

Motion: To delete Policy P6160 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services** ***Post-Graduate Students*** for the second reading, waiving the reading

(M. Watson)

(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

10. Adopt Draft Policy P3321.2 **Policy Relating to**
Education Travel and Study Abroad – first reading

Motion: To adopt Policy P3321.2 **Policy Relating to Education Travel and Study Abroad** for the first reading, waiving the reading

(M. Watson)

(E. Brennan)

Following discussion regarding whether the last word in paragraph six, should it be “orange,” or “red.” Since it was noted that the recommendation from the Education Subcommittee included “red” the policy will reflect the original language.

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

- E. Business/Finance Subcommittee (N. Mello, Chair, M. James, Vice-Chair, D. Gibbs, J. Kane, D. Leith, M.C. Maher, K. Maxwell, M. Sherman)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello reported that the Business/Finance Subcommittee met on Thursday, April

7, 2005, in the Curriculum Center at the District Central Office. The next meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee is scheduled for Tuesday, April 26, 2005, at 5:30 PM in the Curriculum Center.

1. Amend Policy P4251 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Student Activity Fee Schedule** – second reading

Motion: To amend the following policies for the second reading, waiving the reading:

Policy P4251 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Student Activity Fee Schedule**

Policy P4280 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Gifts, Grants and Bequests**

Policy P4100 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Budget**

Policy P4714 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Periodic Financial Reports**

(N. Mello)
(M. Sherman)

Following inquiry as to why #2 of Policy P4100 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Budget** was deleted, it was explained that the policy now reflects the actual practice of the School Committee during the budget process.

Following a suggestion that the School Committee Retreat be governed by a policy, Chair Leith explained that this is something that would require a By-Law change.

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs

Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To amend the following policies for the second reading, waiving the reading:

**Policy P7131 Policy Relating to Support Operations
*Buildings and Grounds Management***

**Policy P7222 Policy Relating to Support Operations
*Contract Transportation Services***

**Policy P7240 Policy Relating to Support Operations
*Safety and Security Procedures***

(N. Mello)
(M. Sherman)

Following an inquiry as to if the CORI process is used for bus drivers, it was explained that District conducts CORI checks on bus drivers, as required by law.

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates

David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

Abstained:
Phillip Mighdoll

(Motion passed 16-0-1)

2. Amend Policy P4280 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance
*Gifts, Grants and Bequests*** – second reading

See above.

3. Amend Policy P4100 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance
*Budget*** – second reading

See above.

4. Amend Policy P4714 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance
*Periodic Financial Reports*** – second reading

See above.

5. Amend Policy P7131 **Policy Relating to Support
*Operations Buildings and Grounds Management*** –
second reading

See above.

6. Amend Policy P7222 **Policy Relating to Support Operations *Contract Services*** – second reading

See above.

7. Amend Policy P7240 **Policy Relating to Support Operations *Safety and Security Procedures*** – second reading

See above.

Member Gibbs distributed copies of *Chapter 70 Trends, FY96 Through FY05* (attachment 4).

Motion: That the Chairman of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee issue letters to Member Towns (chairs of Selectboards and Finance/Advisory Committees) expressing the School Committee's desire to raise the revenue to meet the standards of the community that have been diminished by substantial reduction of state aid, and that any effort to do so should be a unified effort.

(N. Mello)

(M. Sherman)

The Committee discussed the motion at length, including reference to the School and District Report Cards showing a decline in achievement. It was noted that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) is once again sponsoring a Day on the Hill on April 26, 2005 and it might be an opportunity to express concern to the area legislators.

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane

Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member Natalie Mello left the meeting at 9:00 PM.

- F. Community Outreach Subcommittee (D. Gibbs, Chair M. Sherman, Vice-chair, C. Bazinet, E. Brennan, D. Leith, A. Livdahl)

Community Outreach Subcommittee Chair David Gibbs reported a date for the next Community Outreach Subcommittee meeting has not yet been set.

1. Amend Policy AP4290 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Scholarship Funds** – Second Reading

Motion: to amend Policy AP4290 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Scholarship Funds** for the second reading, waiving the reading

(D. Gibbs)
(M. James)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James

John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

- G. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees
- H. Building Committees
 - 1. High School

Chair Leith gave a brief update of the status of the high school building project. He informed the Committee that in the future he will be scheduling a tour of the site for School Committee Members. Following a suggestion to include School Committee candidates on this tour, Chair Leith reminded the Committee that it is a construction site and is not open to the public.

Director of Administrative Services reported that to date there has been no response to the letter from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) regarding the erosion.

The next meeting of the High School Building Committee is April 13, 2005.

Member Alice Livdahl distributed *Suggestions for the Building Committee* and *Mobile Kitchen Rentals* regarding the sale of the modular classrooms and the issue of cold lunches during the renovation part of the project (attachments 5 and 6).

2. Rutland – Naquag/Central Tree
3. Rutland – Elementary School – Elizabeth Brennan

The Rutland Elementary School Building Committee is now scheduled to meet the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. The Building Committee has not met since the last School Committee meeting.

- I. School Council Reports: Central Tree Middle School (C. Rauh), Chocksett Middle School (C. Capparelli), Davis Hill Elementary School (C. Bazinet), Dawson Elementary School (M. James), Houghton Elementary School (N. Plourde), Mayo Elementary School (M. Watson), Mountview Middle School (M. Sherman), Naquag Elementary School (E. Brennan), Paxton Center School (A. Livdahl), Thomas Prince School, and Wachusett Regional High School (K. Maxwell).

Member Michael Sherman attended the Mountview School Council meeting, when the School Improvement Plan was reviewed. Member Sherman discussed the budget at that same meeting.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Chair Leith commented on the NESDEC packet, which is part of the April 6, 2005 minutes. Chair Leith explained that the Search Committee will be made up of School Committee Members and that the consultant will use focus groups to gather input.

A concern was raised regarding the School and District Report Cards, included in the Superintendent's report, regarding the downward trend of achievement scores.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

1. Report on Ratification of Collectively Bargained Agreement Between the Wachusett Regional School District and the Wachusett Cafeteria Association and Truck Drivers Union, Local #170 (aides)

The Deputy Superintendent reported that the District has reached agreement with the Wachusett Regional School District and the Wachusett Cafeteria Association and Truck Drivers Union, Local #170 (aides) and that both agreements have been ratified by the School Committee and the respectively unions.

2. Appropriation of SBAB funds in the amount of \$220,495 to the Town of Rutland for reimbursement for the renovation/addition at Naquag Elementary School

Motion: To appropriate SBAB funds in the amount of \$220,495 to the Town of Rutland for reimbursement for the renovation/addition at Naquag Elementary School

(J. Nunnari)

(E. Brennan)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith

John Nunnari

Cynthia Bazinet

Elizabeth Brennan

Robert Carter

Patricia Gates

David Gibbs

Mark James

John Kane

Alice Livdahl

Mary Catherine Maher

Kelly Maxwell

Norman Plourde

Michael Sherman

Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Phillip Mighdoll

(Motion passed 15-0-1)

VI. Public Hearing

No members of the public wished to speak.

VII. Unfinished Business

Approval of the following minutes was deferred to the April 25, 2005 School Committee Meeting.

- A. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on March 29, 2004
- B. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on April 12, 2004
- C. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on April 26, 2004
- D. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on August 9, 2004
- E. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes – Part 2 of the WRSD Committee held on February 14, 2005

VIII. New Business

Member Norman Plourde read from an e-mail he had sent to Chair Leith on March 30, 2005 regarding the MASC Resolution: *Reverse the Curse* (attachment 7).

Motion: Chair Duncan Leith send the following in a letter to Member Town senators and representatives:

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee urges the full restoration of the state aid cuts of FY04. The School Committee endorses the “Reverse the Curse” plan that restores 50% of the FY04 cuts in FY06 at a statewide cost of \$120,696,901 as a reasonable, prudent, and affordable first step toward full restoration of the local aid cuts.

(N. Plourde)
(D. Gibbs)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Following inquiry regarding the status of Town of Holden vs Wachusett Regional School District Committee et al lawsuit, a brief timeline of what has occurred was provided.

Motion: To enter executive session at the end of the meeting, not to return to public session, for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with non-union personnel.

(J. Nunnari)
(M. Watson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs

Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Following the report on the performance of the Wachusett Regional High School production of *42nd Street*, Member Robert Carter was delegated the responsibility of writing a letter of congratulations on behalf of the School Committee.

Following inquiry regarding the status of discussions on the Princeton/Sterling middle school proposal, it was noted that there was no response from Sterling as yet.

Motion: To direct District Counsel Leo McCabe to begin an inquiry into filing a declaratory judgment in Superior Court or any other judicial body regarding the Joint Resolution and the towns' dividing the school appropriation number, contrary to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 16B and Section 34.

(M. James)

(D. Gibbs)

Member James withdrew the motion.

Motion: To initiate an action, either in court or through administrative appeal, for interpretation of MGL Chapter 71 Section 34 and Section 16B on the legality of bifurcating of the school budget at town meeting.

(M. James)

(D. Gibbs)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith

John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Chair Duncan Leith reported that the Committee would like to get a written legal opinion from District Counsel Leo McCabe regarding this issue.

Motion: To extend meeting by fifteen minutes.
(M. Sherman)
(R. Carter)

~~Member Natalie Mello left the meeting at 10:04 PM.~~

Vote:
In favor:
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl

Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To direct District Counsel McCabe to inquire with the Attorney General's office as to the legality of the Joint Resolution adopted by Member Towns

(M. James)
(D. Gibbs)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
David Gibbs
Mark James
Mary Catherine Maher
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Kelly Maxwell
Phillip Mighdoll

(Motion passed 9-7)

Motion: To extend meeting by fifteen minutes, to adjourn no later than 10:35 PM.

(J. Nunnari)
(C. Bazinet)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Robert Carter
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Kelly Maxwell
Phillip Mighdoll
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed;
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

IX. Adjournment

The Committee left the public meeting at 10:20 PM to enter executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

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