

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1058, Monday, April 28, 2003  
7:00 p.m.

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

John Rokicki, Chairman	Jane James
Duncan Leith, Vice-Chairman	Alice Livdahl
Donald Benson	Kelly Maxwell
Charles Capparelli	Natalie Mello
Clifford Connell	John Nunnari
Carol Esperti	Julie Scott
David Fedeli	Tammy Tod
Kimberly Ferguson	Margaret Watson
Patricia Gates	Patricia Young
Jeffrey Gibbs	

*Committee Members Absent:*

Peter MacDonald

*Administration Present:*

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

*Others Present:*

Linda Lehans, *The Landmark*  
Mary Anne Magiera, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*  
Susan Staudaer, *Sterling Meetinghouse News*  
Frederick Goodrich, Chair, Paxton Selectboard  
Joseph Sullivan, Chair, Holden Selectboard  
Christian deMarcken, Paxton Finance Committee

Larry Floryan, Holden  
Maureen Floryan, Holden  
Mark S. James, Holden  
Michael Sherman, Holden  
Edwin Meyer, Holden  
René Rodriguez, Jr., Holden  
Jerry Gannelli, Princeton

Chairman John Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Chairman John Rokicki informed the Committee that at 7:30 PM representatives from Strelakovsky & Hoit will join the Committee for issues related to the high school project. Chairman Rokicki recognized Members Jeffrey Gibbs, David Fedeli, Kimberly Ferguson, and Jane James for their service to the District as they will not be members of the School Committee following the Annual Town Elections. He thanked them for their service to the community and wished them well.

I. Public Hearing

Edwin Meyer, Holden, informed the Committee that he believes that information was withheld from the public regarding the high school project and that the communities should vote again at the ballot.

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

Jerry Gannelli, Princeton, read a prepared statement (attachment 2).

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Motion: To approve the 1057<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on April 14, 2003, adding the following under Item VI, A, third paragraph, "Member Carol Esperti indicated that she had two problems with the meeting held on April 1, 2003: 1) that the meeting was called an administrative meeting and included public officials not administrators; and 2) that public business was being conducted by public officials but the public was not allowed to attend."

(C. Esperti)  
(K. Ferguson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith

Donald Benson  
Carol Esperti  
Patricia Gates  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
Kimberly Ferguson

Abstained:  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
David Fedeli  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Kelly Maxwell  
Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 12-1-6)

III. Communications

An inquiry was made as to the inclusion of an email in the packet. Chairman John Rokicki reported that the email had been included in the previous packet.

IV. Education Presentation

There was no education presentation at the meeting.

V. Committee Reports

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

No members of the Student Advisory Committee were in attendance.

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

Chair Julie Scott reported that the Education Subcommittee met tonight at 6:00 PM to review the Superintendent's Evaluation and to review the policies.

- 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 Duncan Leith reported that the Davis Hill Elementary School Council adopted its School Improvement Plan. School Committee members do not vote.

Member Margaret Watson reported that Mayo Elementary School Council completed their parent survey and are tallying the results.

## VI. Superintendent's Report

- A. Discussion of Report

Following inquiry, the Superintendent and Director of Student/Information Services Philip Campbell reviewed the process for evaluating the speech therapy services and standards within the District.

Member Julie Scott, representative to the WRSD Holden Building Committee, reported that the vote on the additional funds requested will take place at the meeting in May.

- B. Recommendations requiring action by the School Committee

The Superintendent distributed Additional Recommendations of the Superintendent and requested that these items be addressed first (attachment 3).

Motion: To approve the admittance of the Gardner Public Schools, the West Boylston Public Schools, and the Ashburnham/Westminster Regional School District as members of the FLLAC Collaborative to become effective on August 15, 2003 subject to the following conditions. For the period August 15, 2003 through August 31, 2004 each of these three new members will pay 10% more to FLLAC for tuition fees than do the current members of FLLAC. This 10% new member differential will not be applied to other services provided by FLLAC, such as professional development or contracted personnel services. As of September 1, 2004, each of these three new members will participate on the same terms as the current members of FLLAC.

(C. Esperti)  
(D. Leith)

Following inquiry, the Superintendent reported that the District hosts a FLLAC program where no District students attend. FLLAC has served as a source for special education services for District students for some time.

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To appoint the current members of the Business/Finance Committee as authorized signers of warrants until the Organization of the School Committee is complete.

(N. Mello)  
(D. Leith)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:  
None

Abstained:  
Clifford Connell

(Motion passed 18-0-1)

1. High School Project

- a. Presentation of Preliminary Schematic Design of the High School Project by Strekalovsky & Hoit, Inc.

Chairman John Rokicki introduced Roger Hoit of Strekalovsky & Hoit, Inc. who reviewed the Schematic Design of the High School Project. A question and answer period followed the presentation.

Following inquiry BY MEMBER CAROL ESPERTI, the Superintendent reported that the property line does not abut Kendall Road so an access there is not possible.

The Superintendent repeated that the District is now the owner of the twenty-two plus acres of land adjacent to the high school as the deed was recorded on Monday.

- c. Motion: To approve the preliminary schematic design of the high school project  
(D. Leith)  
(N. Mello)

Member Patricia Gates left the meeting at 8:32 PM.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
David Fedeli  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello

John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
None

Abstained:  
Carol Esperti

(Motion passed 17-0-1)

Member Patricia Gates returned to the meeting at  
8:35 PM

d. Motion: To approve the following Resolution:

The Wachusett Regional School Committee hereby  
resolves that for the Wachusett Regional High  
School Addition/Renovation Project:

- That the Wachusett Regional School District  
intends to start construction on the project prior  
to receiving its state grant;
- That the Wachusett Regional School District  
has been advised by the Commissioner of  
Education that it may not receive the state grant  
within the time period allowed by statute for  
temporary borrowing; and
- That the Wachusett Regional School District is  
legally authorized to issue long-term bonds for  
this project prior to receipt of the state grant.

(D. Leith)

(M. Watson)

Roger Hoit of Strekalovsky & Hoit reported that  
every project in the past two years has passed such  
a resolution in order to proceed with construction  
prior to reimbursement.

The Superintendent reported that Representative  
Lewis Evangelidis has filed legislation to extend



the short-term borrowing from seven years to ten years (attachment 4).

The Superintendent reported that the Resolution must be submitted by June 30, 2003 even if other parts of the application are submitted as late as August. If this is voted tonight, the Superintendent reported that the Resolution would be mailed tomorrow to the Department of Education.

Roger Hoit reported that, depending on the community, in some cases the Building Committee has voted, in some cases the Mayor voted, and appropriately this should be voted by the Regional School Committee.

The Superintendent reported that District staff has explored some alternative borrowing methods. One option explored was doing some of the long-term borrowing right away because the rates are so favorable and would try to even out the tax rate for the taxpayers.

Following inquiry, the Superintendent informed the Committee that the timeline for the borrowing was discussed at the School Committee meetings regarding the high school project. No guarantee was presented as to when reimbursement would be received.

Motion: To table the motion until such time as DOE has confirmed that the resolution is required by June 30, 2003

(C. Clifford)  
(C. Esperti)

Roll call vote on motion to table:

In favor;

Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod

Opposed:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
David Fedeli  
Patricia Gates  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

(Motion failed 5-14)

The Superintendent clarified that the Building Committee is overseeing the project, not the Superintendent. The Superintendent is authorized to enter into contracts and make sure that the contracts are implemented as entered into.

Following an inquiry regarding state reimbursement, Roger Hoit reported that never since 1948 has the State reneged on its commitment to fund a project.

The Superintendent would present any proposals for borrowing to the Committee first prior to going to finance/advisory committees since the School Committee is the final decision-maker and any proposal should first be acceptable to the Committee in order to avoid presumptiveness.

Roll call vote on the main motion:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli

David Fedeli  
Patricia Gates  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Tammy Tod

Abstained:

Kelly Maxwell

(Motion passed 14-4-1)

- b. Motion: To approve URS as Construction/Project Management Firm for the High School Project  
(D. Leith)  
(J. Nunnari)

Building Committee Members John Rokicki and Duncan Leith reported some of the strong points of URS and why the Committee chose this firm as the top choice.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
David Fedeli  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Patricia Gates  
Jeffrey Gibbs

Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
None

Abstained:  
Carol Esperti

(Motion passed 18-0-1)

The Superintendent distributed copies of correspondence from District Counsel Leo McCabe and Holden Town Counsel Robert Martin regarding citizen petitions (attachments 5 and 6).

The Superintendent updated the Committee on the House Ways and Means Committee budget by distributing two information sheets (attachments 7 and 8). The Superintendent reported that it is interesting to note that the bottom line is similar between the Governor's Budget and the House Ways and Means Committee budget.

The Superintendent reported that he spent some time last week with Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, Salvatore F. DiMasi, regarding the Early Retirement Incentive and will meet with Senator Stephen Brewer this week. The Superintendent reported that he is pursuing this avenue but is not encouraged.

District staff is reviewing staff reductions. In order to reduce the impact of reductions on class size, consideration is being given to reductions in art, music, and physical education at the elementary level and the elimination of foreign language at the middle school level.

Motion: To refer to the Education Subcommittee the issue of prioritizing budget policy decisions, such as increasing class size and eliminating entire programs

(P. Gates)  
(D. Benson)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

## VII. Public Hearing

No member of the public wished to speak.

VIII. Unfinished Business

- A. Motion: To adopt DP5241.6 **Policy Relating to Personnel Management *Staff Participation in Political and Union Activities*** for the second reading, waiving the reading  
(C. Esperti)  
(D. Benson)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

- B. Motion: To adopt DP1170 **Policy Relating to School Committee Operation *Use of Electronic Messaging Between and Among School Committee Members*** for the second reading, waiving the reading  
(J. Nunnari)  
(N. Mello)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
Kimberly Ferguson

(Motion passed 16-3)

- C. Motion: To adopt DP7114 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Use of School Facilities for Telecommunications Equipment** for the second reading, waiving the reading  
(C. Esperti)  
(D. Leith)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
David Fedeli  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Patricia Gates

Jeffrey Gibbs  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

IX. New Business

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

Motion: To accept the Superintendent's Evaluation, as presented by Chairman John Rokicki, from each of the Subcommittees, changing the title on the report by the Business/Finance Subcommittee from "Budget/Finance to Business Finance"

(N. Mello)  
(J. Nunnari)

Motion: To extend the meeting by fifteen minutes

(A. Livdahl)  
(K. Maxwell)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
David Fedeli  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Patricia Gates  
Jeffrey Gibbs



Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion to Amend the Education Subcommittee recommendation  
“Compliance with Legal Requirements”, to add “The District is  
working to successfully integrate the pre-school programs.”

(K. Ferguson)

(J. Scott)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:  
None

Abstained:  
Charles Capparelli

(Motion passed 18-0-1)

Roll call vote on the main motion:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
David Fedeli  
Patricia Gates  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Kelly Maxwell  
Tammy Tod

Abstained:  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti

(Motion passed 13-3-3)

B. Proposed School Committee By-Law Changes

Motion: To adopt the proposed School Committee By-Laws, as presented (attachment 9)

(C. Esperti)  
(P. Gates)

Motion to Amend: That the following be added to Article 2, Section 7 following the word "Committee": "for those who wish to become part of the public record."

(C. Esperti)

(P. Gates)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
David Fedeli  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Patricia Gates  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Jane James

(Motion passed 18-1)

Vote on the main motion as amended:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
David Fedeli  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Patricia Gates  
Jeffrey Gibbs

Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Tammy Tod  
Patricia Young

Opposed:  
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 18-1)

The Superintendent extended his thanks to Chairman John Rokicki for his work for the past two years as Chair of the Committee.

X. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn

(J. Scott)  
(P. Young)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Charles Capparelli  
Clifford Connell  
Carol Esperti  
David Fedeli  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Patricia Gates  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Jane James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
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