

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1040, Wednesday May 15, 2002
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

John Rokicki, Chairman	Natalie Mello
Donald Benson	John Nunnari
Carol Esperti	Elizabeth Pape
Jeffrey Gibbs	Julie Scott
Kimberly Ferguson	Kathleen Singh
Sarah Jordan	Tammy Tod
Duncan Leith	Edwin Twarog
David Lowenthal	Margaret Watson
Kelly Maxwell	

Committee Members Absent:

Jane James	Peter MacDonald
Alice Livdahl	

Administration Present:

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

Others present:

Linda Lehans, *The Landmark*
Stacey M. Grossi, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*
Susan Staudaher, *Sterling Meetinghouse News*
Timothy Ethier, Holden Selectboard

Larry Floryan, Holden
Maureen Floryan, Holden
David Gibbs, Sterling
Ralph Caouette, Holden
Jeffrey Wentzell, Paxton
Lee Merlin, Holden
Frank Mero, Rutland
Mark James, Holden

Chairman Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:42 PM.

I. Public Hearing

A. Public Hearing – School Choice

No member of the public wished to speak on School Choice.

B. Public Hearing – General

Frank Mero, President of WREA, spoke of two concerns regarding individual School Committee members. The first concern related to a School Committee member harassing a member of the WREA. He stated that public officials should be prepared for public scrutiny and that the press is entitled to its privileges. He requested that School Committee members not use their delegated authority in individual school matters.

His second concern related to remarks quoted in the newspaper following the recent elections, that the School Committee has to “stop making it easy for the administration and the teachers.” Mr. Mero asked that members walk a day in the shoes of the teachers in the District. He noted that perhaps the remarks were to garner a few more votes, on the backs of teachers. He reported that learning comes alive every day in the classrooms of the District and that remarks such as this one serve no purpose other than to crush the spirit of a dedicated staff. Mr. Mero also remarked that the administration does a great job as well, with few, if any, real disagreements. The District students outperform most other districts in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Mero concluded with the request that School Committee members keep the well-being of the children foremost in their minds and to stop the petty jealousy.

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

Susan Duval, Sterling asked that the District does not become a School Choice district.

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of the 1039th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on April 23, 2002 – approved by consensus

III. Clarifications relating to Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement

- A. Presentation of Warrants and Payroll

Warrants were circulated for signature. Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Duncan Leith directed the Committee that if there are any questions for the Treasurer, forward them to Duncan Leith, Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair; and any questions for the Comptroller, forward them to the Superintendent.

Chairman Rokicki took Agenda Item VI, C.

- C. Discussion of Budgetary Issues

The Superintendent presented possible budget reductions via a PowerPoint presentation (attachment 2). Following general discussion, the Committee focused discussion on the transportation fee proposal.

Agenda Item VI, B 5

1. Motion: That the Superintendent implement a fee schedule and rules that set an individual student fee, a family cap rate of 2.5 times the individual fee, consideration to income levels, and a scale that rewards early payment of transportation fees

(E. Pape)
(N. Mello)

A friendly amendment was offered by Member Donald Benson and accepted by the motion maker and seconder to cap the family rate at \$300 flat fee.

Motion: To move the question.

(K. Singh)
(T. Tod)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs
Kimberly Ferguson
Duncan Leith
David Lowenthal
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Elizabeth Pape
Kathleen Singh
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Sarah Jordan
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog

(Motion passed 13-4)

Roll call vote on main motion which reads: That the Superintendent implement a fee schedule and rules that set an individual student fee with a family cap rate of \$300, consideration to income levels, and a scale that rewards early payment of transportation fees

In favor:

John Rokicki
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti

Jeffrey Gibbs
Sarah Jordan
Duncan Leith
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Elizabeth Pape
Julie Scott
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Kimberly Ferguson
David Lowenthal
Edwin Twarog
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 12-5)

Chairman Rokicki took Agenda Item VI, B1.

1. Motion: That the Wachusett Regional School District not be a school choice district.

(C. Esperti)

(K. Ferguson)

The School Committee liaison to School Council for the high school noted that the school council wanted it recorded that it was in favor of school choice.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs
Kimberly Ferguson
Duncan Leith
David Lowenthal
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

John Rokicki
Sarah Jordan
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
Elizabeth Pape
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 10-7)

Motion: To request that Item VIII, C, Superintendent's evaluation, be taken out of order

(K. Maxwell)
(K. Ferguson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Kimberly Ferguson
Sarah Jordan
Kelly Maxwell
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs
Duncan Leith
David Lowenthal
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Elizabeth Pape
Kathleen Singh
Julie Scott
Edward Twarog

(Motion failed 6-12)

Chairman Rokicki reverted back to the original agenda.

IV. Communications

The Chairman was asked if he had established a building committee for the selection of an architect. He indicated that the committee would be complete by the end of this week. If committee members had suggested names for the Rutland Building Committee, the names should be forwarded to the Chairman.

Member Kathleen Singh left the meeting at 9:35 PM.

Discussion occurred surrounding emails as public record. Exemptions are included in M.G.L. Chapter 4, Section 7, Definition of Public Records, exemption D. A request was made to ask District Counsel to submit in writing to Attorney Zitowitz to determine the quorum.

Chairman Rokicki assured the Committee that he would speak to Attorney McCabe to request the clarification.

Members Carol Esperti, Kelly Maxwell, and Sarah Jordan left the meeting at 9:45 PM.

Motion: To direct District Counsel to notify the District Attorney that the quorum of the Management Subcommittee is four and not three, and to notify him with all due speed.

(E. Twarog)

(D. Lowenthal)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

David Lowenthal

Edwin Twarog

Opposed:

John Rokicki

Donald Benson

Kimberly Ferguson

Jeffrey Gibbs

Duncan Leith

Natalie Mello

John Nunnari

Elizabeth Pape

Julie Scott

Tammy Tod

~~Edwin Twarog~~

Margaret Watson

(Motion failed 2-11)

Following inquiry by a member, the Superintendent reported that he would never distribute copies of letters to the Superintendent regarding a parental concern, since it is not public information.

Member David Lowenthal distributed an opinion regarding the approval of Regional Agreement Amendments (attachment 3).

Motion: To extend the meeting for fifteen minutes

(E. Pape)

(J. Scott)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Donald Benson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Kimberly Ferguson
Duncan Leith
David Lowenthal
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Elizabeth Pape
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Edwin Twarog

(Motion passed 12-1)

At the request of the Superintendent, Chairman Rokicki took the following items out of order: Item VI, B, 3, 4, 5, 6, and Item VI, D. The Superintendent also reminded the Committee that starting on May 28, 2002, at the Organizational Meeting, a new Committee is established and all unfinished business is removed from the agenda.

B. Recommendations requiring action by the School Committee

2. Motion: To adopt of DP3450 **Policy Relating to Education *Non-Discrimination of Educational Materials***, second reading, waiving the reading

(E. Pape)

(K. Ferguson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Donald Benson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Kimberly Ferguson
Duncan Leith
David Lowenthal
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Elizabeth Pape
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

3. Motion: To adopt DP 6760 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services *Recognition of Outstanding Achievement***, second reading, waiving the reading

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs
Kimberly Ferguson
Sarah Jordan

Duncan Leith
David Lowenthal
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Elizabeth Pape
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

4. Motion: To adopt AP6813 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services Scholarships**, second reading, waiving the reading

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs
Kimberly Ferguson
Sarah Jordan
Duncan Leith
David Lowenthal
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Elizabeth Pape
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

D. Executive Session for the Purpose of Discussing Strategies for Negotiations

Motion: To enter executive session for the purpose of discussing strategies for negotiations, not to return to public session.

(K. Singh)

(T. Tod)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Donald Benson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Kimberly Ferguson
Duncan Leith
David Lowenthal
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Elizabeth Pape
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member David Lowenthal left the meeting at 10:05 PM.