

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1078, Monday July 19, 2004
7:00 PM

Modular Cafeteria

Committee Members Present:

Duncan Leith, Chair	John Kane
Cynthia Bazinet	Kelly Maxwell
Elizabeth Brennan	John Nunnari
Charles Capparelli	Norman Plourde
Patricia Gates	Michael Sherman
David Gibbs	Margaret Watson
Mark James	

Committee Members Absent:

Donald Benson, Vice-chair	Natalie Mello
Clifford Connell	Cheryl Rauh
Alice Livdahl	René Rodriguez

Administration Present:

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services
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 7:00 PM.

I. Public Hearing

Chuck Laliberte, Rutland, asked the Committee to authorize the payment for transportation to Norfolk County Agricultural High School in Walpole, Massachusetts. He reported that through information obtained in the course of study guide at the high school and through information in the Guidance News, he assumed that the transportation for his daughter would be provided by the District. Not until he contacted the Central Office to find out what time the bus would be

coming to pick up his daughter did he find out that transportation is not the responsibility of the District. He questioned whether Paxton vocational students were transported by the District. He also reported that the law had been amended to provide for State reimbursement, even though at a 50% reimbursement rate.

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 1077th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on May 26, 2004 – approved by consensus, with Member Kelly Maxwell abstaining.
- B. Approval of the Organizational Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on May 26, 2004 – approved by consensus, with Member Kelly Maxwell abstaining.
- C. Approval of the 256th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on June 3, 2004 – approved by consensus

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 Superintendent; if there were questions regarding the Treasurer's Report, members should contact Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello.

IV. Committee Reports

Chair Duncan Leith reported that he is gathering Members' preferences for subcommittees. He reported that he hoped to have the appointments completed by the end of the week.

- A. Student Advisory Committee
No report.
- B. Management Subcommittee
No report.
- C. Education Subcommittee
No report.

- D. Business/Finance Subcommittee (N. Mello, Chair, C. Connell, J. Kane, D. Leith, M. Sherman, P. Young)

No report.

- E. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

There are no Ad-Hoc Subcommittees.

- F. Building Committees

1. High School

Chair Duncan Leith reported that the “rubber gymnasium” is down. He reported that the project is moving along and that the Project Management Team, URS, is very helpful as the “eyes and ears” for the District.

The Superintendent reported that the District has already received a complaint due to the skimming of the lawn in the front of the building where the new media center will be located. This was necessary to have access to the pipes, as there were no drawings for the set-up of the water system, which goes around the building.

The Superintendent distributed the following documents, made available at State Treasurer Timothy Cahill’s meeting at Oakmont Regional High School, regarding the revised School Building Assistance program:

- *OK news on \$1B for aging schools*, **The Boston Globe**, July 9, 2004 (attachment 2).
- Comparison of SBAB Proposals (attachment 3).

The Superintendent was informed that by June 30, 2007 the District should receive full reimbursement for the high school project (\$46+ million).

The Superintendent reported that the Governor and legislature are finalizing an agreement to fund SBA on an ongoing basis and would reduce construction cost requirements for public facilities.

The legislators in attendance also reported that the Senate is working on proposing a major change to Chapter 70

Aid, trying to simplify and clarify the formula. The Senate Ways and Means Committee is also expected to release a bill that would substantially increase Chapter 70 Aid for next year. In addition, legislation is being drafted to return all Lottery Funds to the cities and towns, as the legislation was originally voted. Both of these efforts, if successful, will make for brighter budget planning in FY06. In addition, there appears to be a major effort to reimburse regional transportation at 100%, which is the language of the original legislation.

Rutland is expected to receive full reimbursement in FY08.

The newly revised School Building Assistance funding proposal, which is expected to be voted on by the legislature on July 20th, will be funded with one cent of the five cent per dollar spent sales tax.

2. Rutland – Naquag/Central Tree
3. Rutland – Elementary School – John Nunnari

Member John Nunnari reported that the bids exceed the amount approved by the town by over \$3 million and exceeds what the State will support for reimbursement by almost \$5 million.

All of the bids were rejected and the WRSD Rutland Building Committee is looking for ways to reduce the scope of the project, including the possible relocation of the school on the site.

4. Sterling

The Superintendent reported that, after two years, the parking lot and driveway are to be started next week.

Member Patricia Young is moving to Colorado and will be resigning, if she has not already done so. Member David Gibbs requested that Chair Duncan Leith send Member Young a letter thanking her for her service. Chair Leith reported that he had recently called Member Young to thank her.

Member Patricia Gates left the meeting at 7:43 PM.

G. School Council Reports: Central Tree Middle School, Chocksett Middle School, Davis Hill Elementary School, Dawson Elementary School, Houghton Elementary School, Mayo Elementary School, Mountview Middle School, Naquag Elementary School, Paxton Center School, Thomas Prince School, and Wachusett Regional High School.
Member Margaret Watson served as the School Committee liaison to the Mayo School Council and reported that the school is seeking people willing to speak to the various grades to enrich the curriculum.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

In response to inquiry from a School Committee member regarding the location of the Employee Recognition Dinner, the Superintendent informed the Committee that Paxton Center School was selected due to the proximity of the cafeteria to a meeting room for the School Committee meeting.

Following inquiry regarding the request for transportation to an out-of-District vocational school, the Superintendent reported that the course guide had been published prior to the change in the law and that a correction should have been sent out to parents. The Superintendent further informed the Committee that Paxton vocational students are not transported by the District. The process for a student to attend an out-of-District vocational school requires the signature of the Superintendent. This, however, does not obligate the District in any way for the cost of either tuition or transportation, it only obligates the town. Tuition and transportation are paid by the towns not the District. The Superintendent commented that he was not happy to hear that the public was misinformed

The Superintendent advised the Committee that if the District opens up the option for paying for transportation to one student, the Committee must open it to all. Choice and Charter students must provide their own transportation, as it is a choice of the family to attend a school outside of the District Member Town vocational program. When asked about comments made by an

administrator at Central Tree, the Superintendent reported that he would check into those comments.

The Superintendent reported that the District has worked with the Town of Rutland in the past on a similar matter and would continue to do so, if the town accepts the responsibility for paying for the transportation.

Chair Duncan Leith allowed Mr. Laliberte to distribute to the Committee a copy of page 16 of the high school course guide (attachment 4).

Following inquiry, the Superintendent reported that the new software for special education IEP's is being funded by a grant. The Superintendent will provide the cost of the software to the Committee in the next report.

The Superintendent explained to the Committee that if a school does not meet its Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for two years in a row, then the District must offer school choice to parents. The Superintendent further explained that a school is considered to not have met its AYP if even one small section of the school's population does not meet the AYP. Information will become available to the District in the upcoming months.

Following an inquiry regarding the reduction in some grants, the Superintendent advised the Committee that it was not due to eligibility, but rather a reduction in the funding.

The Superintendent advised the Committee that when the Special Education Task Force has completed its work, the Committee will receive a full report. The Superintendent also advised the Committee that final interviews are being held on July 20, 2004 for the Administrator of Special Education.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the Committee

1. Amended 2004 School Committee Meeting Calendar

Motion: To adopt the Amended 2004 School Committee Meeting Calendar (attachment 5)

(C. Capparelli)

(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

2. Approval of the sale by the District of a \$7,000,000 3.00% coupon rate, Revenue Anticipation Note, dated July 15, 2004 and payable June 30, 2005, to First Southwest at par and accrued interest plus a premium of \$87,780.

Further, that the consent to bid dated July 5, 2004 by the Treasurer to First Southwest Company, the financial advisor, bidding the note is hereby confirmed.

Motion: To approve the sale by the District of a \$7,000,000 3.00% coupon rate, Revenue Anticipation Note, dated July 15, 2004 and payable June 30, 2005, to First Southwest at par and accrued interest plus a premium of \$87,780.

Further, that the consent to bid dated July 5, 2004 by the Treasurer to First Southwest Company, the financial advisor, bidding the note is hereby confirmed.

(J. Nunnari)

(J. Kane)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith

Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

3. Approval of the Treasurer's recommendation for the sale of \$3,758,000, General Obligation School Bonds of the District dated July 15, 2004, authorized September 30, 2002 to Corby Capital Markets at par and accrued interest plus a premium of \$56,841.94. The bonds shall be payable on July 15th of the years and in the principal amounts and bear interest at the respective rates, as follows subject to earlier redemption at the option of the District as provided in the preliminary Official Statement dated July 1, 2004:

Year	Amount	Interest Rate	Year	Amount	Interest Rate
2005	\$133,000	3.000%	2015	\$185,000	5.000%
2006	\$135,000	3.000%	2016	\$190,000	5.000%
2007	\$140,000	3.000%	2017	\$200,000	5.000%
2008	\$145,000	3.000%	2018	\$205,000	5.000%
2009	\$150,000	3.000%	2019	\$215,000	5.000%
2010	\$155,000	3.250%	2020	\$225,000	5.000%
2011	\$160,000	3.500%	2021	\$235,000	5.000%
2012	\$165,000	3.500%	2022	\$245,000	4.250%
2013	\$170,000	3.750%	2023	\$260,000	4.375%
2014	\$175,000	5.000%	2024	\$270,000	4.375%

Further, that the consent dated July 8, 2004 by the Treasurer to First Southwest Company, the financial advisor, bidding for the bonds is hereby confirmed.

Motion: To approve the Treasurer's recommendation for the sale of \$3,758,000, General Obligation School Bonds of the District dated July 15, 2004, authorized September 30, 2002 to Corby Capital Markets at par and accrued interest plus a premium of \$56,841.94. The bonds shall be payable on July 15th of the years and in the principal amounts and bear interest at the respective rates, as follows subject to earlier redemption at the option of the District as provided in the preliminary Official Statement dated July 1, 2004:

Year	Amount	Interest Rate	Year	Amount	Interest Rate
2005	\$133,000	3.000%	2015	\$185,000	5.000%
2006	\$135,000	3.000%	2016	\$190,000	5.000%
2007	\$140,000	3.000%	2017	\$200,000	5.000%
2008	\$145,000	3.000%	2018	\$205,000	5.000%
2009	\$150,000	3.000%	2019	\$215,000	5.000%
2010	\$155,000	3.250%	2020	\$225,000	5.000%
2011	\$160,000	3.500%	2021	\$235,000	5.000%
2012	\$165,000	3.500%	2022	\$245,000	4.250%
2013	\$170,000	3.750%	2023	\$260,000	4.375%
2014	\$175,000	5.000%	2024	\$270,000	4.375%

Further, that the consent dated July 8, 2004 by the Treasurer to First Southwest Company, the financial advisor, bidding for the bonds is hereby confirmed.

(J. Kane)

(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

4. Approval of FY05 Pre-Paid Vendor List

The Superintendent reminded the Committee that reimbursements for the Superintendent's expenses are not included on the FY05 Pre-Paid Vendor List.

Motion: To approve the FY05 Pre-Paid Vendor List
(C. Capparelli)
(D. Gibbs)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

5. Appropriation of SBAB funds in the amount of \$1,066,720 to the Town of Sterling for reimbursement for the renovation at Houghton/Chocksett Schools

Motion: To appropriate SBAB funds in the amount of \$1,066,720 to the Town of Sterling for reimbursement for the renovation at Houghton/Chocksett Schools
(C. Capparelli)
(N. Plourde)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The Superintendent left the meeting at 8:20 PM.

VI. Public Hearing

No one from the public wished to speak.

VII. Unfinished Business

Chair Duncan Leith reported that the Executive Session Minutes would be available at the August 9, 2004 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

VIII. New Business

Chair Duncan Leith distributed information on the Open Meeting Law, which was provided by Patricia Smith from the State District Attorney's Office at a meeting hosted by the Holden Selectboard (attachment 6). Chair Duncan Leith reported that there have been three investigations regarding executive session and the District Attorney has always determined that the School Committee acted in accordance with the provisions of the Open Meeting Law. A question was posed to District Attorney Smith whether it was illegal to discuss executive session information with the press. Ms. Smith reported that there was nothing in the Open Meeting Law that addressed this. Chair Leith cautioned the Committee, however, that all matters discussed in executive session are made public when the matter is completed and that discussions with the press would not be appropriate.

The School Committee policy on email was shared with Ms. Smith, who reviewed the policy and reported that it looked fine.

Following discussion regarding the process for approving or rejecting School Improvement Plans, by consensus the Committee will take action on the plans at the August 9, 2004 School Committee meeting, even though procedurally, the plans have been accepted as any rejections must happen within thirty days of the review. The Committee felt that it was important to recognize the work done by school councils on the School Improvement Plans.

Member Norman Plourde read a prepared statement (attachment 7).

Motion: That:

1. a copy of the *Washington State School Directors Association Handbook* be made for each member of the Committee;
2. the Chair appoint an Ad-Hoc Subcommittee, first consisting of five (5) members, representing each town, whose initial charge will be to review and discuss the handbook contents;
3. the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee be increased by an additional five (5) members whose charge will be to make initial recommendations to the full Committee for the superintendent selection process;
4. the Chair name the additional five (5) members in the best interest of the full School Committee;
5. the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee be dissolved should the Committee decide to use a Search Consultant; and

6. the talents of the full Committee be used throughout the selection process.

(N. Plourde)
(K. Maxwell)

A friendly amendment was offered and accepted that items 3 and 4 be four members, rather than five, as ten members total could be a quorum of the full Committee

There was some discussion regarding the use of the Management Subcommittee, rather than an ad-hoc subcommittee, but the consensus of the Committee was to use an ad-hoc subcommittee, which has the sole responsibility to review and establish a recommendation for the process to select a superintendent.

Chair Duncan Leith advised the Committee that this Ad-Hoc Subcommittee will set the ground rules and is not a Superintendent Search Committee.

Roll call vote on motion, which reads: That:

1. a copy of the *Washington State School Directors Association Handbook* be made for each member of the Committee;
2. the Chair appoint an Ad-Hoc Subcommittee, first consisting of five (5) members, representing each town, whose initial charge will be to review and discuss the handbook contents;
3. the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee be increased by an additional four (4) members whose charge will be to make initial recommendations to the full Committee for the superintendent selection process;
4. the Chair name the additional four (4) members in the best interest of the full School Committee;
5. the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee be dissolved should the Committee decide to use a Search Consultant; and
6. the talents of the full Committee be used throughout the selection process.

In favor:

Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Kelly Maxwell

John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman

Opposed:
None

Abstained:
Duncan Leith
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 10-0-2)

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn

(C. Capparelli)
(J. Kane)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
David Gibbs
Mark James
John Kane
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

ADT:ss/School Committee/Minutes