

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1044, Monday, August 12, 2002
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

John Rokicki, Chairman	Peter MacDonald (7:10 PM)
Duncan Leith, Vice-Chairman	Natalie Mello
Donald Benson	John Nunnari
Carol Esperti	Julie Scott
Kimberly Ferguson	Kathleen Singh (7:12 PM)
Jeffrey Gibbs	Tammy Tod
Alice Livdahl	Edwin Twarog
David Lowenthal	Margaret Watson
Jane James	Patricia Young

Committee Members Absent:

David Fedeli	Kelly Maxwell
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Administration Present:

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Susan Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Others Present:

Ria Megnin, *The Landmark*
Stacy Grossi, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*
Douglas Briggs, Chair Rutland Selectboard
Stanley Moss, Princeton Selectboard
Timothy Ethier, Holden Selectboard
Larry Floryan, Holden
Maureen Floryan, Holden
David Gibbs, Sterling
Mark James, Holden
James Jumonville, Holden
Jeffrey Wentzell, Paxton

Chairman Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Member David Lowenthal distributed *My Response to the Fearsome Foursome* (attachment 1).

I. Public Hearing

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

David Gibbs, Sterling, read a prepared statement (attachment 3).

James Jumonville, Holden, suggested two schools of 1200 students each: Holden/Paxton in one school and Sterling/Rutland/Princeton for the other. He reminded the Committee that it lost ground at each high school election. He believes that Wulfson only gave the Committee rhetoric. He believes that the inequity needs to be solved first. He urged the Committee to work for a plan to solve the inequity.

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of the 234th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on June 25, 2002

Chairman Rokicki called for a vote of the acceptance of the minutes.

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Jane James
Peter MacDonald
John Nunnari
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

Abstained:
Natalie Mello
Julie Scott
Margaret Watson

(The minutes were accepted as presented.)

- B. Approval of the 1043rd Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on July 8, 2002

Chairman Rokicki called for a vote of the acceptance of the minutes.

In favor:
John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Jane James
John Nunnari
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

Abstained:
Donald Benson
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh

(The minutes were accepted as presented.)

C. Approval of the 235th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on July 15, 2002

Chairman Rokicki called for a vote of the acceptance of the minutes.

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Carol Esperti
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Jane James
Peter MacDonald
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Abstained:

Donald Benson
Kimberly Ferguson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Natalie Mello

(The minutes were accepted as presented.)

D. Approval of the 236th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on August 5, 2002 -- approved by consensus

Chairman Rokicki called for a vote of the acceptance of the minutes.

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson

Kimberly Ferguson
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Jane James
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

Abstained:
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs
Peter MacDonald
Edwin Twarog

(The minutes were accepted as presented.)

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

A. Presentation of Warrants and Payroll – Warrants were circulated for signature.

IV. Communications

Motion: That the Committee censure the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Alfred Tutela, for the unauthorized personal use of Wachusett School District assets (attachment 4)

(E. Twarog)
(K. Singh)

~~The Superintendent informed the Committee that this was his professional responsibility and not personal. Is truth a character trait and should we be teaching this to our students? He commented that this was a waste of public time.~~

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
David Lowenthal
Peter MacDonald
Kathleen Singh
Edwin Twarog

Opposed:

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

Abstained:

John Rokicki
Tammy Tod

(Motion failed 6-10-2)

V. Committee Reports at the Discretion of the Chair

Chairman Rokicki reported that the Subcommittee assignments have been made. Members who would like to serve on School Councils should let the Chairman know following the meeting.

It was brought to the Chairman's attention that the Management Committee did not include a member from Sterling. Chairman Rokicki will re-look at the members.

- A. Management Subcommittee (J. Rokicki, Chair, D. Leith, C. Esperti, A. Livdahl, K. Maxwell, N. Mello, J. Scott, E. Twarog)
- B. Business/Finance Subcommittee (N. Mello, Chair, J. Rokicki, D. Leith, D. Benson, D. Fedeli, K. Singh)

C. Education Subcommittee (J. Scott, Chair, K. Ferguson, J. Gibbs, D. Lowenthal, P. MacDonald, J. Nunnari, T. Tod, M. Watson, P. Young)

D. School Building Committees

1. Holden – (J. Scott)

No report.

2. Paxton

Member Alice Livdahl will serve on the Paxton Building Committee.

3. Rutland

1. Central Tree/Naquag – (J. Rokicki)

No report.

2. Elementary Feasibility – (J. Rokicki)

i. Selection of an Architect – Rutland Feasibility Study

The Superintendent explained the Designer Selection Process. The Building Committee can vote on the Committee's recommendation or choose to interview the three choices. Chairman Rokicki explained that each architect was interviewed for forty-five minutes, references were checked, and then the committee voted.

The Superintendent reminded the Committee that this is a further step to solve the enrollment problems in Rutland. This is for a feasibility study, the funds of which have already been approved.

Motion: To accept the recommendation of the Rutland Building Committee to hire Dore and Whittier, Inc. as the architect for the Rutland Feasibility Study

(J. Gibbs)

(N. Mello)

Following an inquiry from a member, the Superintendent reported that the cost is \$50,000, is a District cost, and has already been appropriated by the Committee.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Alice Livdahl
Jane James
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

David Lowenthal

(Motion passed 17-0-1)

Chairman Rokicki reported that Dore & Whittier, Inc. is a firm interested in pursuing a “green grant”. He will get some information and share it with the Committee.

4. Sterling

The Superintendent corresponded with Sterling Building Chairman Remo Rossi via email and there has been a delay and the project will not be done prior to the start of school.

E. Education Subcommittee

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of report

Following inquiry from a member regarding the athletic fees, the Superintendent reminded the Committee that the budget was adopted with full knowledge that athletic fees would be increased for athletics. The figure was determined to offset costs but try not to discourage participation.

The Superintendent reported that the budget is already short by approximately \$250,000. He is also not confident that the entire transportation reimbursement amount will actually be received by the District. The Superintendent will supply a firmer estimate for the amount expected to be raised. The Superintendent will include a report on the status of E & D funds.

The Superintendent explained how Charter School reimbursement works. The State agreed to a formula for reimbursement and now are not reimbursing at that rate.

B. Recommendations requiring action by the School Committee

1. Motion: To Approve the FY03 Pre-Paid Vendor List
(D. Leith)
(K. Singh)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Alice Livdahl

David Lowenthal
Jane James
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

2. Motion: To approve the Amended FY03 Staffing Authorization

(N. Mello)

(D. Leith)

Following an inquiry regarding the advertisement in the *Sunday Telegram & Gazette* for the new Facility Manager's position, the Superintendent explained that he was using parallel management functioning.

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Jane James
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh

Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

VII. Public Hearing

No member of the public wished to speak.

VIII. Unfinished Business

IX. New Business

Following an inquiry by a member, Chairman Rokicki explained that District Counsel Leo McCabe probably wrote the letter to Department of Education Legal Counsel Debra Comfort in answer to Holden Town Counsel's opinion that the Committee can implement the Martin Opinion without the approval of the Department of Education and that he was being pro-active.

Motion: To discontinue the services of Attorney Leo McCabe
(K Singh)
(E. Twarog)

Chairman Rokicki reminded the Committee that this issue should be brought to the Management Subcommittee before action by the full Committee.

Following discussion over the purpose and appropriateness of the letter by Attorney McCabe, the Superintendent recommended that it would be more appropriate to make direct inquiry rather than speculate. The Superintendent will request Attorney McCabe come to the next meeting.

Motion: To table the motion.

(C. Esperti)
(T. Tod)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Alice Livdahl
Jane James
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

John Rokicki
David Lowenthal
Edwin Twarog

(Motion passed 15-3)

Motion: To implement the Martin Amendment immediately
(D. Lowenthal)
(K Singh)

The Superintendent suggested that the Committee ask for bond counsel's opinion as they are knowledgeable of school financing issues.

Motion: To table the motion

(C. Esperti)
(J. Scott)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Jeffrey Gibbs

Alice Livdahl
Jane James
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

John Rokicki
David Lowenthal
Edwin Twarog

Abstained:

Patricia Young

(Motion passed 14-3-1)

At the direction of Chairman Rokicki, the Superintendent will invite Leo McCabe to the next regular School Committee meeting at 7:30 PM.

Motion: To have the Chairman set up an Ad-Hoc Subcommittee of five with representatives from each town to approach Palmer & Dodge to render an opinion on the legality of the implementation of the Martin Opinion.

(C. Esperti)
(D. Benson)

In response to an inquiry as to the legal process, it was identified that a Declaratory Judgment could be determined by the Court and that the injured party must bring it to court, in this case, the individual towns.

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Kimberly Ferguson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Jane James
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Kathleen Singh
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson

Abstained:

John Rokicki

(Motion failed 6-11-1)

Motion: To censure Members Esperti and Singh

(J. Nunnari)

(M. Watson)

When asked to clarify his motion, Member Nunnari explained that the MOTION TO censure WAS IN RESPONSE TO ~~came from~~ the District Attorney's correspondence.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Nunnari
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Kimberly Ferguson
David Lowenthal
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Patricia Young

Abstained:

John Rokicki
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Kathleen Singh

(Motion failed 2-10-6)

X. Adjournment

Motion: to adjourn

(J. Gibbs)
(N. Mello)

Vote:

In favor:

Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs
Alice Livdahl
Jane James
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Duncan Leith
Kimberly Ferguson
David Lowenthal
Peter MacDonald
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Edwin Twarog
Patricia Young

Abstained:

John Rokicki

(Motion passed 9-8-1)

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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

ADT:ss/School Committee/Minutes