

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1081, Tuesday October 12, 2004  
7:00 PM

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Duncan Leith, Chair     | Kelly Maxwell   |
| Cynthia Bazinet         | Natalie Mello   |
| Elizabeth Brennan       | John Nunnari    |
| Patricia Gates          | Norman Plourde  |
| David Gibbs             | Michael Sherman |
| Mark James              | Margaret Watson |
| Alice Livdahl (7:35 PM) |                 |

*Committee Members Absent:*

|                           |                |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Donald Benson, Vice-chair | John Kane      |
| Charles Capparelli        | Cheryl Rauh    |
| Clifford Connell          | René Rodriguez |

*Administration Present:*

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools  
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services  
Susan H. Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

*Others present, who desired to be recorded as present*

None

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

I. Public Hearing

No member of the public wished to speak.

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 1080<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD  
Committee held on September 13, 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

#### A. Student Advisory Committee (C. Brennan, K. Getchell, J. Leger, C. Wilde)

Chair Duncan Leith reported that the representatives from the Student Advisory Committee have been chosen and are:

Colleen Brennan, Rutland  
Kirsten Getchell, Princeton  
Jakki Leger, Rutland  
Christa Wilde, Holden

#### B. Management Subcommittee (D. Leith, Chair, D. Benson, C. Capparelli, P. Gates, D. Gibbs, M. James, N. Mello, J. Nunnari, M. Watson)

Chair Duncan Leith reported that the Management Subcommittee has not yet met and he has scheduled a meeting for Wednesday, November 17, 2004 at 6:00 PM in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

#### C. Education Subcommittee (M. Watson, Chair, C. Bazinet, E. Brennan, A. Livdahl, J. Nunnari, N. Plourde, R. Rodriguez)

Education Subcommittee Chair Margaret Watson reported that the Education Subcommittee met on October 4, 2004. The Subcommittee reviewed DP3321.1 **Policy Relating to Education *Field Trips Involving Late Night and Overnight Travel***.

1. DP3321.1 **Policy Relating to Education *Field Trips Involving Late Night and Overnight Travel*** – first reading

**Motion:** To adopt DP3321.1 **Policy Relating to Education *Field Trips Involving Late Night and Overnight Travel*** for the first reading, waiving the reading  
(M. Watson)  
(J. Nunnari)

The Superintendent reported that a Member expressed concern that there was no provision in the policy for a crisis plan. The Superintendent informed the Committee that each school has an extensive Crisis Plan that is reviewed annually with local police and fire chiefs. The Superintendent suggested that, if the Committee desired, that reference to emergency management and communications protocols could be added to the policy.

**Motion to Amend:** To add “emergency management and communications protocols” following the word “security arrangements” in section A-5.  
(P. Gates)  
(N. Mello)

**Vote on Motion to Amend:**

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Following inquiry, the Superintendent advised the Committee that the ratio of students to chaperones varies depending on the trip and the age of the students.

Chair Margaret Watson reported that the last sentence on Section E-5 should be prefaced with “In such cases”, as was voted by the Education Subcommittee for recommendation for adoption to the School Committee.

Vote on Main Motion, as amended:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member Alice Livdahl arrived at 7:35 PM.

Education Subcommittee Chair Margaret Watson reported that the Subcommittee also discussed the community service requirements at the high school. The Subcommittee will be reviewing this further at the next meeting. The Superintendent reminded the School Committee that there are consequences for reducing staff while enrollment increased. There are not enough teachers to offer enough courses for all students. Time-on-Learning requirements may be met through community service. The high school uses this model to make up the difference between the number of students and the teachers allocated to the high school to teach the students. The Superintendent advised that the School Committee must publicly defend the budget and the need for increased staff. The Superintendent reported that more students are enrolled in community service than three years ago, as a direct result of staff reductions due to School Committee appropriation reductions.

The Superintendent advised that the Committee could formulate a policy regarding the use of community service as fulfilling the requirements for time-on-learning, as well as what would constitute community service. The Superintendent advised the School Committee of the cost implications for such a policy and that, if through policy, staffing of one school would require increases, then that staff would have to come out of other schools which would continue the escalation of increased class sizes at the other schools.

Following inquiry, the Superintendent reaffirmed that the implementation of a Service Learning Curriculum would require teaching staff due to collectively bargained agreements.

In response to a Member request, the Superintendent reported that enrollment information regarding community service, by grade, would be included in the next Superintendent's Report.

The Superintendent reminded the Committee that prior to the establishment of the FY05 budget, the Committee developed standards which were followed by the Superintendent in the preparation of the budget. If the Committee desires to change or re-align its standards, the Superintendent advised the Committee that it should meet for that purpose.

The Superintendent advised the School Committee that District staff has expressed concern regarding the audio and video taping of parent meetings. At the recommendation of school staff, the Superintendent is recommending that DP3813 **Policy Relating to Education *Audio and Video Taping of Meetings*** be considered by the School Committee. The policy was developed by the District's special education counsel.

Chair Duncan Leith referred the policy to the Education Subcommittee for review and recommendation.

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

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello reported that the Business/Finance Subcommittee met several times regarding the search for a Treasurer.

1. Recommendation for Appointment of Treasurer

Motion: That the Wachusett Regional School Committee offer James Dunbar the position of Treasurer of the Wachusett Regional School District, and authorize the chairman to enter into contract negotiations with the candidate, given guidance and specifics to be determined in an executive session of the Wachusett Regional School Committee conducted at the close of this meeting (attachment 1)

(N. Mello)  
(M. Sherman)

The Superintendent reported that Member John Kane wanted to be included on the public record as being in support of the appointment of James Dunbar as Treasurer.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To enter executive session at the end of the meeting, not to return to the public, to discuss contract negotiations regarding the Treasurer

(N. Mello)  
(M. Sherman)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello reported that the Business/Finance Subcommittee voted unanimously the following:

*The Business and Finance Subcommittee supports the efforts of the Community Outreach Subcommittee to identify alternative sources to reinstate late buses to each town for students participating in curricular and extra-curricular activities at WRHS.*

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello reported that the Subcommittee discussed re-joining the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) for an estimated \$5,825.

Motion: To join the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) for an estimated \$5,825.

(D. Gibbs)

(K. Maxwell)

The Superintendent advised the School Committee that the membership is not in the FY05 budget and, therefore, the source

of funding must be identified in the motion and that the only available funds for appropriation are in Excess & Deficiency (E & D). Members David Gibbs and Kelly Maxwell accepted as a friendly amendment, to add “and that the funds be appropriated from Excess & Deficiency (E & D)”

Discussion continued on the merits of joining MASC.

Motion: To postpone until the first School Committee meeting in January 2005 action on the motion

(A. Livdahl)

(P. Gates)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
Norman Plourde  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
John Nunnari  
Michael Sherman

(Motion passed 8-5)

The next meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee is October 26, 2004 at 6:00 PM in the Curriculum Center.

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

Community Outreach Subcommittee Chair David Gibbs reported that the first meeting of the Subcommittee is scheduled for Wednesday, October 20, 2004, at 7:00 PM in the Superintendent’s Conference Room II at the Central Office. Two



items have been referred to the Subcommittee: nutrition in the schools and the raising of funds for the possible reinstatement of late buses.

F. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

1. Review the Process for Selection of a Superintendent (N. Plourde, Chair, C. Capparelli, C. Connell, M. James, D. Leith, A. Livdahl, N. Mello, J. Nunnari, M. Watson)

Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Chair Norman Plourde reported that the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee had met twice since the last School Committee meeting. The minutes of the meetings were made available in the Superintendent's Report. Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Chair Plourde distributed copies of the tentative timeline and the agenda for the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee meeting of November 1, 2004 (attachments 2 and 3). Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Chair Plourde encouraged School Committee Members to attend and reported that no votes would be taken at that meeting.

Motion: To adopt the recommendation of the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Process for Selection of a Superintendent:

*The goals of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee are to establish a fair, open and inclusive process for selecting a highly qualified superintendent for the Wachusett Regional School District to succeed Dr. Alfred Tutela upon his anticipated retirement in June, 2006, and to effectuate a smooth transition between administrations*

(N. Plourde)  
(J. Nunnari)

Chair Duncan Leith expressed concern that the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee was acting beyond the scope of the originally voted charge. This Ad-Hoc Subcommittee was established as for the short-term and is to be dissolved should the School Committee decide to hire a consultant.

Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Chair Norman Plourde assured Chair Leith and the Committee that the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee is acting within the parameters of the

original motion and is working to establish a process. The Ad-Hoc Subcommittee would then be dissolved.

The Superintendent advised the School Committee that the successor Committee would make the decision as to the final process for selecting a Superintendent and that the task at hand should be to prepare advisory information of what the requirements and expectations of a new superintendent would be. The Superintendent suggested that other School Committees be contacted to learn how other committees have addressed superintendent searches and should be determining the direction it wants the District to take in order to know what strengths desired of a superintendent. The Superintendent suggested that the current Committee do the homework for the successor Committee to develop ways of agreeing on a successor superintendent. The Superintendent advised that the characteristics and strengths of a superintendent be defined. The Superintendent further advised that the Committee Members had previously expressed concern regarding the Superintendent's evaluation process, which should be reviewed in the process.

Following concern expressed by Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Chair Plourde that the Superintendent should not be involved in the discussion, the Superintendent reminded the Committee that his job is to advise the School Committee and that he will continue to perform his responsibilities and that any advice which was provided was intended to assist the Committee in its most critical charge and was not intended to judge the performance of any subcommittee or its members.

Motion: To move the question

(M. Sherman)

(D. Gibbs)

Roll call vote on motion to move the question:

In favor:

Duncan Leith

Cynthia Bazinet

Elizabeth Brennan

Patricia Gates

David Gibbs

Mark James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman

Opposed:  
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 12-1)

Roll call vote on main motion:

In favor:  
Duncan Leith  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman

Opposed:  
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 12-1)

The Superintendent expressed concern that the tentative timeline presented lacked benchmarks and suggested that it be revised to include specific benchmarks to ensure an orderly process which would be monitored.

G. Building Committees

1. High School

The Superintendent shared, via projector, a series of pictures depicting the erosion on the high school site, as

well as some of the erosion control efforts, to reinforce the need for concern and involvement, by the Holden Conservation Commission, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

Chair Duncan Leith reported that the Building Committee is monitoring the contingency fund carefully.

Approximately \$2.04 million of contingency funds have already been used and the renovation of the inside of the fifty-year old building has not been started. Of the \$2.04 million appropriated, \$1 million was for ad-alternates voted by the Building Committee at the beginning of the process.

The Superintendent informed the Committee that the erosion issues have set the timeline back thirty-four days. It is expected that these days may be able to be made up throughout the course of the entire project.

2. Rutland – Naquag/Central Tree

The Superintendent informed the Committee that there is a need to contact the Rutland Selectboard since this Building Committee is now defunct.

3. Rutland – Elementary School – John Nunnari

Member Elizabeth Brennan reported that, following the receipt of the District's concerns, the Rutland Building Committee was asked to reconsider some of its actions regarding the re-design of the project to reduce costs, which are safety and maintenance issues to the District. The Building Committee did not reconsider.

Member Brennan reported that the architect for the Rutland Elementary School Project, Lamoureux Pagano Associates, has requested assistance from Senator Stephen Brewer for an appeal to School Building Assistance (SBA) to consider increasing the "maximum allowable cost" established by the SBA during its review of the Rutland Elementary School on Glenwood Road.

The Superintendent recommended that the Committee endorse the architect's petition to Senator Brewer.

Motion: To authorize the Chair to share with Senator Stephen Brewer the Committee's endorsement of the architect's appeal

(E. Brennan)

(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member Brennan reported that the Rutland Building Committee had received legal advice from Rutland Town Counsel to proceed under the old building regulations and not under the newly adopted regulations. The Superintendent informed Member Brennan that he had heard that other school projects in the State were advised to follow the new regulations. The Superintendent will follow-up and contact Member Brennan with further information.

4. Sterling

Member Norman Plourde reported that the parking lot project is proceeding slowly.

- H. School Council Reports: Central Tree Middle School (C. Rauh), Chocksett Middle School (D. Gibbs), 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 (C. Connell), and Wachusett Regional High School (K. Maxwell).

Chair Duncan Leith announced that Member Charles Capparelli will be the School Council Liaison for Chocksett Middle School to replace David Gibbs.

Member Elizabeth Brennan reported that Naquag Elementary School Council met and discussed the overcrowding at the school and the rotating six-day schedule, which is working better this year due to teacher continuity. The MAT-8 test results were discussed and a concern was raised that an explanation of terms was not included with the reports this year. The Superintendent informed the Committee that he would review this and report back to the School Committee in the Superintendent's Report.

- V. Superintendent's Report

- A. Discussion of Report

Following inquiry, the Superintendent reported that there were no bids on a possible cell tower on the high school site.

- B. Presentation – Review of Budget Expenditure Trends

The Superintendent provided the Committee with information regarding budget expenditure trends from FY02-FY05 (attachment 4).

- C. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

- 1. Transfer of \$46,053, the indirect cost value of state and federal grants to professional development revolving account, as delineated in the Superintendent's Report

Motion: To transfer of \$46,053, the indirect cost value of state and federal grants to professional development

revolving account, as delineated in the Superintendent's Report

(J. Nunnari)  
(M. Sherman)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

2. **AP5274 Policy Relating to Personnel Management *Unrepresented Non-Contract Employees Benefits*** – first reading

The Superintendent reported that the District has approximately forty-five employees not represented by collective bargaining units or individual contracts. The policy should be updated and amended as recommended.

Discussion ensued and the Committee agreed to act on this rather than refer it to a subcommittee.

Motion: To adopt **AP5274 Policy Relating to Personnel Management *Unrepresented Non-Contract Employees Benefits*** for the first reading, waiving the reading

(D. Gibbs)  
(N. Mello)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

3. Appropriation of SBA funds in the amount of \$338,045 to the Town of Paxton for reimbursement for the renovation of Paxton Center School

Member John Nunnari left the meeting at 9:38 PM.

Motion: To appropriate SBA funds in the amount of \$338,045 to the Town of Paxton for reimbursement for the renovation of Paxton Center School

(A. Livdahl)

(N. Mello)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello



Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

4. Appropriation of SBA funds in the amount of \$759,779 to the Town of Rutland for reimbursement for the renovation/addition at Naquag Elementary School

Member John Nunnari returned to the meeting at 9:40 PM.

Motion: To appropriate SBA funds in the amount of \$759,779 to the Town of Rutland for reimbursement for the renovation/addition at Naquag Elementary School  
(E. Brennan)  
(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

5. Endorsement of Petition of Rutland Building Committee to Senator Stephen Brewer

See Item 4, G-3 above.

VI. Public Hearing

There were no members of the public who wished to address the Committee.

VII. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business before the Committee.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business brought before the Committee.

IX. Adjournment

The Committee entered executive session at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D.