

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1046, Tuesday October 15, 2002
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

John Rokicki, Chairman	Kelly Maxwell
Duncan Leith, Vice-Chairman	Natalie Mello
Donald Benson	John Nunnari
Carol Esperti (7:45 PM)	Julie Scott
David Fedeli	Kathleen Singh (7:12 PM)
Kimberly Ferguson	Tammy Tod
Jane James	Edwin Twarog
Alice Livdahl	Margaret Watson
David Lowenthal	Patricia Young (7:10 PM)

Committee Members Absent:

Jeffrey Gibbs	Peter MacDonald
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Administration Present:

Paul K. Soojian, Director of Operations
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative services
Philip E. Campbell, Director of Student/Information Services
Susan H. Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Others Present:

Linda Lehans, *The Landmark*
Stacy Grossi, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*
Sue Staudaher, *Sterling Meetinghouse News*
Meghan Ackerman, *ECHO*
Remo Rossi, Chair, Sterling Selectboard
Joseph Sullivan, Chair, Holden Selectboard
Mark James, Holden
Larry Floryan, Holden
Maureen Floryan, Holden
David Gibbs, Sterling

David Clark, Sterling
Melinda Johnson, Paxton
John Schneeweis, Sterling
Debbie Croucher, Sterling
Donna Dominguez, Sterling
Sherry Horeanopoulos, Princeton
Ann Quill, Sterling

Chairman John Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. With the indulgence of the Committee, Chairman Rokicki addressed Item VD5a, the presentation by Strekalovsky & Hoit, Inc.

Eugene Raymond and Roger Hoit from Strekalovsky & Hoit, Inc. and Michael Daley from Financial Advisory Associates, Inc. presented to the Committee the PowerPoint presentation prepared for the informational meetings scheduled in the member towns (attachment 1). Following the presentation, discussion occurred on the presentation.

Following a question regarding the inclusion of information regarding excess debt impacts on the towns, Michael Daley reminded the Committee that this is a very difficult issue to understand and his recommendation was to not include it in the presentations to the public.

In response to an inquiry regarding operational costs, Michael Daley indicated that his report would be budgets for both options that will total the same as the District's Net School Spending amount.

When asked why the phrase "educationally sound" was used in regards to a one-school proposal, Michael Daley reminded the Committee that both proposals are educationally sound and that the Department of Education would not provide reimbursement for any proposal not educationally sound.

It was agreed by consensus that a breakdown of costs on the two-school proposal would be helpful.

Chairman Rokicki summarized that the following issues should be resolved:

- The use of "educationally sound"
- The use of "requires two programs of studies" on the two-school proposal
- The reference to extracurricular activity
- Whether any reference to educational literature should be made in the presentation

Motion: To remove “educationally sound” from the presentation
(C. Esperti)
(E. Twarog)

Motion: To move the question
(A. Livdahl)
(T. Tod)

Roll call vote:

In favor

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Roll call vote on motion:

In favor

Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
David Lowenthal
Kathleen Singh
Edwin Twarog

Opposed:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

(Motion failed 5-13)

By consensus the Committee agreed to change “requires” to “supports” on the slide regarding the two-school proposal.

By consensus, the Committee agreed to replace “broader” with “broad” in reference to extracurricular activities on the one-school proposal.

The Chairman called an end to the discussion.

Motion: To over-rule the Chairman and continue discussion

(C. Esperti)
(D. Lowenthal)

The motion was withdrawn.

Motion: That reference would be made to educational literature in support of small schools

(D. Lowenthal)
(E. Twarog)

Motion to Amend: To add that scholarly research be provided to the public on both sides of the issue provided that the research is scientifically valid

(M. Watson)
(N. Mello)

Roll call vote:

In favor

John Rokicki
Donald Benson
John Nunnari
Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Duncan Leith
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
David Lowenthal
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Kelly Maxwell
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Patricia Young

(Motion failed 6-12)

Roll call vote on main motion:

In favor

Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
David Lowenthal
Kathleen Singh
Edwin Twarog

Opposed:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari

Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

(Motion failed 6-12)

Motion: To make available a body of educational research, agreed to by the Committee, available at the presentations

(C. Esperti)
(K. Singh)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
David Lowenthal
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog

Opposed:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Jane James
Kelly Maxwell
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

(Motion failed 9-9)

Member John Nunnari left the meeting at 10:00 PM.

Motion: To extend the meeting by thirty minutes to deal with SBAB Appropriations, Staffing Authorization, Adoption of Warrant Articles, By-Law Change, and Public Hearing

(N. Mello)
(J. James)

Roll call vote:

In favor

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

David Lowenthal
Edwin Twarog
Patricia Young

(Motion passed 14-3)

B. Recommendations requiring action by the School Committee

1. That all interest monies generated by the borrowing for the long-term high school facility be reinvested into the project.

Member Julie Scott left the meeting at 10:02 PM.

2. Motion: To appropriate SBAB funds in the amount of \$759,779 to the Town of Rutland for reimbursement for the renovation/addition at Naquag Elementary School

(T. Tod)
(N. Mello)

Roll call vote:

In favor

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

3. Motion: To appropriate SBAB funds in the amount of \$275,939 to the Town of Paxton for reimbursement for the renovation/addition at Paxton Center School
(A. Livdahl)
(N. Mello)

Roll call vote:

In favor

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello

Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Members John Nunnari and Julie Scott returned to the meeting at 10:05 PM.

4. Motion: To approve the amended FY03 staffing authorization, as presented by the Superintendent
(D. Leith)
(J. James)

Roll call vote:
In favor

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
Donald Benson

Abstained:
David Lowenthal

(Motion passed 16-1-1)

Chairman Rokicki distributed copies of the motions to adopt the warrant articles (attachment 2).

5. Motion: Contingent upon approval of bond counsel, without substantive changes, that the sum of \$70,500,000 is appropriated for the purpose of renovating and reconstructing the existing Wachusett Regional High School facility and to construct an addition thereto for an enrollment of 2,075 students, and for the purchase of an adjoining parcel of land and for architectural, engineering and other costs related to the project. Said land purchase being a portion of the premises owned by Weyman Lundquist, consisting of approximately twenty-two and sixteen one hundredths (22.16) acres of undeveloped land and being a portion of the premises shown on Holden Assessors Map 129, Parcel 3, and Parcel 13, which premises are contiguous to the present location of the Wachusett Regional High School, and that this appropriation be raised by incurring debt by the issuance of bonds and notes under Chapter 462 of the Acts of 1977, Section 16 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, and Section 15 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement, and to that end, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Regional District School Committee, be authorized to issue bonds or notes therefore; that pursuant to Section 15.3 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement it is hereby determined that the approval of said debt by member towns shall be by vote taken at special town meetings with vote counts by printed yes/no ballots; and to authorize the Superintendent to enter into and execute all contracts necessary or material to such work and to act or do anything relative thereto; provided that the vote on this debt authorization shall only be effective if it receives the highest percentage at or above two-thirds majority, District wide, voter approval of the two debt authorizations approved by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee and to adopt Warrant Article 1:

To see if the voters of the member towns of the Wachusett Regional School District will approve the borrowing of \$70,500,000 by the Wachusett Regional School District to renovate and reconstruct the existing Wachusett Regional High School facility and to construct an addition thereto for an enrollment of 2,075 students, and for the purchase of an adjoining parcel of land and for architectural, engineering and other costs related to the project. Said land purchase being a portion of the premises owned by Weyman Lundquist, consisting of approximately twenty-two and sixteen one hundredths (22.16) acres of undeveloped land and being a portion of the premises shown on Holden Assessors Map 129, Parcel 3, and Parcel 13, which premises are contiguous to the present location of the Wachusett Regional High School, and that this appropriation be raised by incurring debt by the issuance of bonds and notes under Chapter 462 of the Acts of 1977, Section 16 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, and Section 15 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement, and to that end, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Regional District School Committee, be authorized to issue bonds or notes therefor; and to authorize the Superintendent to enter into and execute all contracts necessary or material to such work and to act or do anything relative thereto; provided that the vote on this debt authorization shall only be effective if it receives the highest percentage at or above two-thirds majority, District wide, voter approval of the two debt authorizations approved by the Wachusett Regional District Committee.

(J. Nunnari)
(K Maxwell)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
David Lowenthal

(Motion passed 17-1)

6. Motion: Contingent upon approval of bond counsel, without substantive changes, that the sum of \$80,000,000 is appropriated for the purpose of renovating and reconstructing the existing Wachusett Regional High School facility and to construct an addition thereto to accommodate 1,525 students and to construct a new high school facility for 575 students and the purchase of a parcel of land containing approximately twenty-six acres to accommodate the new facility and for architectural, engineering and other costs related to the project and that this appropriation be raised by incurring debt by the issuance of bonds and notes under Chapter 462 of the Acts of 1977, Section 16 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, and Section 15 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement, and to that end, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Regional District School Committee, be authorized to issue bonds or notes therefore; that pursuant to Section 15.3 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement it is hereby determined that the approval of said debt by member towns shall be by vote taken at special town meetings with vote counts by printed yes/no ballots; and to authorize the Superintendent to enter into and

execute all contracts necessary or material to such work and to act or do anything relative thereto; provided that the vote on this debt authorization shall only be effective if it receives the highest percentage of a two-thirds majority, District wide, voter approval of the two debt authorizations approved by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee and to adopt Warrant Article 2:

To see if the voters of the member towns of the Wachusett Regional School District will approve the borrowing of \$80,000,000 by the Wachusett Regional School District to renovate and reconstruct the existing Wachusett Regional High School facility and to construct an addition thereto to accommodate 1,525 students and to construct a new high school facility for 575 students and the purchase of a parcel of land containing approximately twenty-six acres to accommodate the new facility and for architectural, engineering and other costs related to the project and that this appropriation be raised by incurring debt by the issuance of bonds and notes under Chapter 462 of the Acts of 1977, Section 16 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, and Section 15 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement, and to that end, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Regional District School Committee, be authorized to issue bonds or notes therefor; and to authorize the Superintendent to enter into and execute all contracts necessary or material to such work and to act or do anything relative thereto; provided that the vote on this debt authorization shall only be effective if it receives the highest percentage of a two-thirds majority, District wide, voter approval of the two debt authorizations approved by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee.

(J. Nunnari)
(K. Maxwell)

A friendly amendment was offered by Member Edwin Twarog and accepted by Members John Nunnari and Kelly Maxwell to add “in Princeton or Sterling” after “facility” in both the motion and the warrant article in referring to the school for 575 students.

Roll call vote on Motion, as amended, which reads:

Contingent upon approval of bond counsel, without substantive changes, that the sum of \$80,000,000 is appropriated for the purpose of renovating and reconstructing the existing Wachusett Regional High School facility and to construct an addition thereto to accommodate 1,525 students and to construct a new high school facility for 575 students in Princeton or Sterling and the purchase of a parcel of land containing approximately twenty-six acres to accommodate the new facility and for architectural, engineering and other costs related to the project and that this appropriation be raised by incurring debt by the issuance of bonds and notes under Chapter 462 of the Acts of 1977, Section 16 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, and Section 15 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement, and to that end, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Regional District School Committee, be authorized to issue bonds or notes therefore; that pursuant to Section 15.3 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement it is hereby determined that the approval of said debt by member towns shall be by vote taken at special town meetings with vote counts by printed yes/no ballots; and to authorize the Superintendent to enter into and execute all contracts necessary or material to such work and to act or do anything relative thereto; provided that the vote on this debt authorization shall only be effective if it receives the highest percentage of a two-thirds majority, District wide, voter approval of the two debt authorizations approved by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee and to adopt Warrant Article 2:

To see if the voters of the member towns of the Wachusett Regional School District will approve the borrowing of \$80,000,000 by the Wachusett Regional School District to renovate and reconstruct the existing Wachusett Regional High School facility and to construct

an addition thereto to accommodate 1,525 students and to construct a new high school facility for 575 students in Princeton or Sterling and the purchase of a parcel of land containing approximately twenty-six acres to accommodate the new facility and for architectural, engineering and other costs related to the project and that this appropriation be raised by incurring debt by the issuance of bonds and notes under Chapter 462 of the Acts of 1977, Section 16 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, and Section 15 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement, and to that end, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Regional District School Committee, be authorized to issue bonds or notes therefor; and to authorize the Superintendent to enter into and execute all contracts necessary or material to such work and to act or do anything relative thereto; provided that the vote on this debt authorization shall only be effective if it receives the highest percentage of a two-thirds majority, District wide, voter approval of the two debt authorizations approved by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee.

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog

Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

I. Public Hearing

A. Request to Speak by Citizens: David Gibbs, Sterling, Mark James, Holden, Maureen Floryan, Holden, and Larry Floryan, Holden

Joseph Sullivan, Chair, Holden Selectboard, asked that the Committee consider having a meeting with Selectboards and Finance/Advisory Committees.

Melinda Johnson, Paxton, read a prepared statement (attachment 3)

Maureen Floryan, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 4)

Mark James, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 5)

Member Kelly Maxwell left the meeting at 10:30 PM.

Motion: To extend the meeting by fifteen minutes

(J. James)

(M. Watson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith

Donald Benson

David Fedeli

Jane James

Julie Scott

Kathleen Singh

Tammy Tod

Edwin Twarog

Margaret Watson

Opposed;
Kimberly Ferguson
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
John Nunnari
Patricia Young

Abstained:
John Rokicki
Carol Esperti

(Motion passed 9-5-2)

Members Kimberly Ferguson, Alice Livdahl, and Natalie Mello left the meeting at 10:31 PM.

David Gibbs, Sterling, read a prepared statement (attachment 6).

John Schneeweis, Sterling, expressed concern that the public should not be limited to one minute during public session.

Remo Rossi, Chair, Sterling Selectboard, reminded the Committee that they need the support of a broad segment of the community, especially in the future, if funds above net school spending will be needed. He supported educational research on small schools, particularly research done by Massachusetts principals. He thanked the Committee for their work.

Larry Floryan, Holden, reminded the Committee that the proposal on operating costs presented at the last meeting contained some assumptions that he would be happy to explain.

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 238th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on September 12, 2002 – deferred to the next meeting
- B. Approval of the 1045th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on September 18, 2002 – deferred to the next meeting

- C. Approval of 239th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on September 23, 2002 – deferred to the next meeting
- D. Approval of 240th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on September 30, 2002 – deferred to the next meeting
- III. Clarifications relating to Treasurer’s Report and Financial Statement
 - A. Presentation of Warrants and Payroll -- the warrants were circulated for signature
- IV. Communications
- V. Committee Reports
 - A. Management Subcommittee (J. Rokicki, Chair, D. Leith, C. Esperti, A. Livdahl, K. Maxwell, N. Mello, J. Scott, E. Twarog)
 - 1. Motion: To amend the School Committee By-Laws, to add:

*Article 3-MEETINGS, Section 4. **Public
Comment Time Limit***

*Statements by the public during public session,
other than guests invited to give presentations,
be given one minute for comment.*

*And change the current Section 4
Reimbursement/Expenses to Section 5
(E. Twarog)
(D. Lowenthal)*

Motion: To extend the meeting by five minutes
(E. Twarog)
(D. Fedeli)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Donald Benson
David Fedeli
Jane James

David Lowenthal
John Nunnari
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Duncan Leith
Carol Esperti
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Patricia Young

Abstained:

John Rokicki

(Motion passed 8-5-1)

Member Edwin Twarog read a prepared statement in support of the motion (attachment 7)

Motion: To table the motion

(J. Nunnari)
(D. Leith)

Roll call vote:

In favor

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Jane James
David Lowenthal
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Edwin Twarog

(Motion passed 11-3)

VI. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn

(C. Esperti)
(J. James)

Vote:

In favor

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Jane James
David Lowenthal
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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