

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1047, Monday, October 28, 2002
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

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

Committee Members Absent:

None

Administration Present:

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
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*
Joseph Sullivan, Chair, Holden Selectboard
Stanley Moss, Princeton Selectboard
Dick Sheppard, Sterling Selectboard

Joseph Giotta, Holden Finance Committee
Mark James, Holden
Maureen Floryan, Holden
Larry Floryan, Holden
David Gibbs, Sterling
Jake Hagopian, Holden
Donna Dominguez, Sterling
Leo Bachant, Holden
John Schneeweis, Sterling
Ann Quill, Sterling
Larry Greene, Princeton
Susan Duval, Sterling
David Clark, Sterling
Kate White, Holden
Melinda Johnson, Paxton
Hilary Anderson, Princeton
Peter Johnson, Rutland
John Fitzgerald, Princeton
Sheila Despres, Sterling
Vincent Ross, Rutland
Cecele Tod, Rutland
Terence McKiernan, Holden
John Kilcoyne, Sterling
Jerry Gannelli, Princeton

Chairman Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:55 PM. He reported that he would entertain one half hour of public session, followed by the education presentation by District staff. At that time, he would recess the regular meeting and call the special meeting to order.

Motion: To over-rule the Chair and have the education presentation at the end of the meeting.

(E. Twarog)
(C. Esperti)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Jeffrey Gibbs
David Lowenthal
Peter MacDonald

Kelly Maxwell
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Edwin Twarog

Opposed:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
David Fedeli
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

(Motion passed 11-9)

I. Public Hearing

Larry Greene, Princeton, advised the School Committee that it was improper that the Superintendent was asking employees to gather signatures in Princeton. He also asked the Committee to reconsider and make the high school vote a ballot.

Ann Quill, Sterling, reported that she helped to gather 550 signatures to submit to the Sterling Selectboard for a ballot vote.

John Schneeweis, Sterling, asked for clarification on the choice option and whether or not transportation costs would increase.

Susan Duval, Sterling, asked the Committee to reconsider and have the high school vote be by ballot. She particularly asked the Sterling representatives to listen to the Sterling representatives.

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

Stanley Moss, Princeton Selectboard, reported that the Princeton Selectboard had received a petition from 364 voters requesting a ballot vote. The Princeton Selectboard voted again to deny the request of the School Committee for a Special Town Meeting. The Board also indicated that if a petition is received by the Selectboard from voters for

a Special Town Meeting, the Selectboard may or may not act on the petition.

Mark James, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 2).

Donna Dominguez, Sterling, read a prepared statement (attachment 3)

David Gibbs, Sterling, read a prepared statement (attachment 4).

Tom Friend, Princeton, recently got involved in this issue and because of the cost of the project the Committee should reconsider and ask for a ballot vote.

Vincent Ross, Rutland, worked to collect 377 signatures to submit to the Rutland Selectboard requesting a ballot vote.

Kate White, Holden, thanked the representatives who attended the informational meeting in Holden last week. She encouraged the Committee to reconsider and request a ballot vote.

Debbie Croucher, Sterling, commented that the idea of deprivation is interesting as no one is being deprived of the opportunity to vote. She indicated the people are not as informed, as they should be but rather as informed as they want to be. She asked why some are trying to defeat the Committee's own proposal. She listed roadblocks used to discredit the proposal:

- Accreditation;
- Jefferson School built illegally;
- The demographics are inaccurate -- NESDEC wrong; the consultants are wrong;
- West Boylston wants Sterling;
- Let's wait; no hurry;
- We have a better plan,
- Inequity; and
- Voting process.

The meeting was recessed for five minutes at 8:45 PM due to a fire alarm. Chairman Rokicki called the meeting back to order at 8:50 PM.

Leo Bachant, Holden, asked the Committee to reconsider and have a ballot vote and continue the informational meetings.

Jerry Gannelli, Princeton, asked the Committee to reconsider as many voters have signed petitions.

John Kilcoyne, Sterling, asked the Committee to reconsider as all citizens are needed, especially the senior citizens.

Joseph Sullivan, Chair, Holden Selectboard, indicated that he would respect any request from the Committee. He then read from a prepared statement (attachment 5).

Joseph Giotto, Holden Finance Committee, believes that a ballot vote is the better way to go. Town meetings are not the best way as people have stopped going to town meetings. Ballot votes are more inclusive.

Chairman Rokicki recessed the meeting at 9:05 PM.

Chairman Rokicki called the meeting back to order at 9: 15 PM.

Members David Fedeli, David Lowenthal, Kimberly Ferguson and Edwin Twarog left the meeting at 9:15 PM.

Chairman Rokicki acknowledged the student representatives, Lynn Zambetti and Kim Brunnelle. Lynn Zambetti gave the results of a student poll regarding the high school proposals (attachment 6). Students were concerned about the extracurricular activities. Kim Brunnelle read a prepared statement on the views of the Student Council (attachment 7). The Superintendent asked the students to email him how many students responded.

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 238th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on September 12, 2002 – approved by consensus
- B. Approval of the 1045th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on September 18, 2002

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs

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

Opposed:
Kelly Maxwell

Abstained:
Jane James

(Motion passed 14-1-1)

C. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD
Committee held on September 18, 2002

Vote:

In favor:
John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
Kelly Maxwell

Abstained:
Jane James
Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 13-2-1)

- D. Approval of 239th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on September 23, 2002

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

Kelly Maxwell

(Motion passed 15-1)

- E. Approval of 240th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on September 30, 2002

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Jeffrey Gibbs
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello

John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
Kelly Maxwell

(Motion passed 15-1)

F. Approval of 241st Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 10, 2002, with corrections as follows:

- Natalie Mello arrived at 8:30 PM
- Page 3, remove Natalie Mello from vote
- Page 4, change the vote total to 5-13-1
- Page 10, change Peter MacDonald to voting in favor of the motion
- Page 10, change the vote total to 12-7

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:
Kelly Maxwell

Abstained:
Carol Esperti

(Motion passed 14-1-1)

- G. Approval of the 1046th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 15, 2002

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
Kelly Maxwell

Abstained:
Jeffrey Gibbs
Peter MacDonald

(Motion passed 13-1-2)

- H. Approval of the 242nd Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 23, 2002, with corrections as follows:

- Location of Meeting was Mayo Elementary School
- Page 2, change Carol Esperti to voting in favor of the motion
- Page 2, change the vote total to 11-6

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

Kelly Maxwell

Abstained:

Peter MacDonald

(Motion passed 14-1-1)

Warrants were circulated for signature

III. Communications

A concern was expressed that a School Committee member had solicited proposals for modular school buildings. Member Margaret Watson reported that she had called the Ethics Commission and the Inspector General. She reported that Ethics Commission and the Inspector General showed concern of the appearance of impropriety and that the process was already tainted.

Member Carol Esperti left the meeting at 9:40 PM.

Motion: To refer this matter to Leo McCabe as to how the Committee should proceed

(M. Watson)

(D. Benson)

The Superintendent advised that a letter should go to the vendors from the Chair that the motions were premature.

Member Peter MacDonald offered and it was accepted by Member Margaret Watson to make a friendly substitute motion "That Chairman Rokicki will send each company a letter and copy the District Counsel."

Vote on motion, which reads: That Chairman Rokicki will send each company a letter and copy the District Counsel.

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Carol Esperti
David Fedeli
Jeffrey Gibbs
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Kelly Maxwell
Kathleen Singh

(Motion passed 13-2)

Motion: To extend the meeting by ten minutes.

(P. MacDonald)
(D. Leith)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson

Jeffrey Gibbs
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Following a question, the Superintendent clarified his disclosure statement in the Superintendent's report.

Following inquiry, the Superintendent reported that the operating costs received from Strekalovsky & Hoit, Inc. were drafts but that he had not received anything better and would avoid comment. The Superintendent explained the line item for heating. The operating costs will be part of the presentation since they were public record.

The Superintendent clarified to the Committee in response to an inquiry about Larry Greene's public statement, that he had provided misinformation and that the Superintendent had not ask any teacher to solicit signatures for a petition. When asked about what had been expended of the \$25,000 appropriation for dissemination of materials, the Superintendent informed the Committee that a mailing regarding the informational meeting was sent to all households. Another will be sent with copies of the warrants articles. The Special Town Meeting expenses could exceed \$10,000 for the November 16th meeting and the same, if needed for the December 3rd Special Town Meeting.

A request was made by the Superintendent to extend the meeting to review the Superintendent's recommendations.

Motion: To extend the meeting by ten minutes

(J. Scott)

(P. MacDonald)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Jeffrey Gibbs
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Donald Benson
Kelly Maxwell
Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 12-3)

Members Kelly Maxwell and Tammy Tod left the meeting at 10:10 PM.

IV. Education Presentation

See Superintendent's Report (VI, D).

V. Committee Reports

- A. Student Advisory Committee (K. Brunelle, L. Zambetti, N. Leger, E. DeMarco)
- B. Education Subcommittee (J. Scott, Chair, K. Ferguson, J. Gibbs, D. Lowenthal, P. MacDonald, J. Nunnari, T. Tod, M. Watson, P. Young)

The first meeting was cancelled due to a lack of quorum. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 19, 2002, at 6:00 PM at the Curriculum Center.

Chairman Rokicki reported that Jeffrey Gibbs is no longer a member of Education Subcommittee.

C. School Council Reports:

Chairman Rokicki appointed the following School Committee representatives as liaisons to the School Councils:

Central Tree Middle School -- John Nunnari
Chocksett -- Peter MacDonald
Davis Hill -- Duncan Leith
Dawson -- Jane James
Houghton -- Kathleen Singh
Mayo -- Margaret Watson
Mountview -- Donald Benson
Naquag -- Jeffrey Gibbs
Paxton -- Alice Livdahl
Thomas Prince -- David Lowenthal
Wachusett Regional High School -- Natalie Mello

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

There was no discussion.

B. Presentation on 2002 MCAS Scores

The presentation did not occur due to the lateness of the meeting.

C. Recommendations requiring action by the School Committee

1. Application for Green School

The Superintendent recommended that Rutland not apply as a green school but to wait until after the high school vote since there can only be one application in the District and the high school proposal could benefit all towns.

VII. Public Hearing

VIII. Unfinished Business

The Superintendent informed the Committee that, according to Robert's Rules of Order, if no action were taken to remove the motion from the table, the motion would not be included on the next agenda.

- A. Tabled 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*

No action was taken.

IX. New Business

X. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn

(J. Scott)
(D. Benson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Jeffrey Gibbs
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Peter MacDonald
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott

Kathleen Singh
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Chairman Rokicki adjourned the meeting at 10:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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