

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1030, Monday, November 19, 2001  
7:00 p.m.

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

John Rokicki, Chairman	Duncan Leith (8:07 PM)
Sherry Horeanopoulos, Vice-chairman	Alice Livdahl
Carol Esperti	David Lowenthal
Kimberly Ferguson (7:07 PM)	Peter MacDonald
Michael Gennert	John Nunnari
Jeffrey Gibbs (7:43 PM)	Elizabeth Pape
Sarah Jordan	Julie Scott

*Committee Members Absent:*

Kenneth Fensin	Kathleen Singh
Jane James	Jeffrey Wentzell
Kelly Maxwell	

*Administration Present:*

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools  
Paul K. Soojian, Director of Operations  
Brian O'Connell, Director of Administrative Services  
Philip Campbell, Director of Student/Information Services  
Susan Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

*Others present:*

Linda Lehans, *The Landmark*  
Richard Halloran, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*  
Susan Staudaher, *Sterling Meetinghouse News*  
Douglas Briggs, Rutland Selectboard  
Debbie Croucher, Sterling  
Susan Schneweiss, Sterling  
Bob Rauh, Rutland  
Maureen Floryan, Holden

Larry Floryan, Holden  
David Gibbs, Sterling  
Susan Reynolds, Holden  
Susan Hildum, Holden  
Donna Dominguez, Sterling  
Dave Clark, Sterling  
Jean Theurkauf, Sterling  
Edwin Twarog, Princeton  
Elizabeth Sabasinski, Charlton  
Patricia Scales, Rutland

Chairman Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Chairman Rokicki deferred to Director of Operations Paul Soojian who introduced Brian O'Connell, Director of Administrative Services

I. Public Hearing

Debbie Croucher, Sterling read a prepared statement (attachment 1).

Susan Schneeweis, Sterling read a prepared statement (attachment 2)

Susan Hildum, Holden read a prepared statement (attachment 3).

Donna Dominguez, Sterling read a prepared statement (attachment 4).

Larry Floryan, Holden, distributed "Funding Inequities Issue – How did we get here?" (attachment 5). He reviewed his findings regarding the funding inequities among member towns. This information will be presented to all five towns at the December 4, 2001 town meetings.

Ed Twarog, Princeton, informed the Committee that he did not believe that the modulars were a viable solution. He stated that if the modulars were permanent then reimbursement would happen. He believes that the modulars should be put up north to make a new school. He indicated that the School Committee serves as a "rubber stamp" for the Superintendent.

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of the 223<sup>rd</sup> Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 3, 2001 approved by consensus, with Member Kimberly Ferguson abstaining.

Chairman Rokicki asked Vice-chair Sherry Horeanopoulos to act as Chair temporarily, as he had to leave the meeting to retrieve something from his car.

- B. Approval of the 1029<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 9, 2001 were corrected by adding the following on page 7 after transportation “including discussion on a policy for bussing students who walk on unsafe streets” and on page 12, Member Michael Gennert asked that the motion be included even if it was not seconded. The following will be added: “Motion: That all WRSD busses fly the American flag in a conspicuous place. (D. Lowenthal). The motion died for a lack of a second.” Vice-chair Horeanopoulos asked by a show of hands if the minutes were acceptable as amended. They were approved by consensus, as amended.

Chairman Rokicki resumed his position as Chair.

- C. Approval of the 226<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on October 23, 2001 – approved by consensus.
- D. Approval of the 227<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on November 7, 2001 -- approved by consensus with a correction on page 11, the “motion passed 11-1”. Members Carol Esperti and Kimberly Ferguson abstained.

### III. Clarifications relating to Treasurer’s Report and Financial Statement

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

### IV. Communications

There were no communications discussed at this time.

### V. Committee Reports at the Discretion of the Chair

- A. Student Advisory Committee (L. McNally, C. Smith)

Student Advisory Committee members Lauren McNally and Caitlin Smith reported that there was a memorial service held in honor of the victims of September 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy and teacher Brian Atlas. The Walk for Unity was very successful and raised more

than \$11,000 for the families of the victims of September 11<sup>th</sup>. The students reported that the girls soccer team won the state finals; the boys and girls cross country teams went to the state finals; the cheerleading squad was fifth in their state; and they have a winning football team. Parents Night was held this past week.

- B. Management Subcommittee (J. Rokicki -- Chair, C. Esperti, S. Horeanopoulos, D. Leith, K. Maxwell, K. Singh, J. Wentzell)

Management Subcommittee has not met.

- C. Education Subcommittee ( K. Ferguson, M.Gennert, S. Jordan, A. Livdahl, D. Lowenthal, J. Nunnari, E. Pape)

Member John Nunnari will serve as Chairman of the Education Subcommittee.

Member Alice Livdahl reported that at the last meeting the phonemic awareness program was presented and policy review began.

Member Carol Esperti asked if the Special Education Parent Group issue was brought up. Member John Nunnari reported that it had been discussed and a place on the Education Subcommittee agenda would be reserved for the group. Member Jordan clarified that a general invitation was given to the group. If they wished to address the School Committee, the public forum is appropriate.

Member Gennert asked if the minutes of the subcommittee were sent to members. The Chairman reminded members that the minutes of the meetings are included in Director Soojian's report.

- D. Business/Finance Subcommittee (J. Wentzell – Chair, K. Fensin, J.Gibbs, J. James, D. Leith, P. MacDonald, J. Rokicki, J. Scott)

Sullivan & Powers, District auditors, presented the FY01 audit report. The Rutland Needs Assessment was presented to the Subcommittee. The issue was deferred until January, with more updated enrollment figures.

The DOR Audit was also discussed; the proposal from new auditors were discussed; the Treasurer's update was included at the meeting. Chairman Rokicki clarified that there were two audit reports addressed, one is the annual report, the other was done by the Department of Revenue.

There was also an issue presented regarding a request to tie in to the sewer line on Bullard Street.

The use of Medicaid funds for the Jefferson renovation was discussed. Chairman Rokicki referred the discussion of the Jefferson School renovation to the Business/Finance Subcommittee.

Director Soojian clarified that the DOR did a thorough and exhaustive audit. They reviewed and then conclude with findings. This was done and there were only two findings.

The Committee was reminded that the Superintendent fully advised the Committee, well in advance.

- E. Ad-Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Regional Agreement (S. Horeanopoulos – Chair, D. Leith, J. Rokicki, K. Singh, J. Wentzell)

Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Chair Sherry Horeanopoulos reported that the subcommittee met. The minutes will be included in the next packet. A January meeting will be scheduled.

Committee membership/make-up was discussed. Any changes hopefully will be brought to annual town meetings.

- F. Ad-Hoc Subcommittee -- Member Town Funding Inequities (S. Horeanopoulos, K. Maxwell, J. Rokicki, K. Singh, J. Wentzell)

The charge of the Committee has concluded. Chairman Rokicki reported that he has signed letters to all who served on the Committee. Once the letters are mailed, the Committee is dissolved.

Individual members of the subcommittee will speak in favor of the proposal at member town meetings.

The Superintendent arrived at the meeting at 8:05 PM. He had been late due to the need to present the modular proposal to the Holden Selectboard and Finance Committee. Member Leith also attended the meeting and arrived at the same time.

G. Ad-Hoc Subcommittee – Legislative Corrections to Regional School District Funding (J. Rokicki, D. Leith, J. Nunnari)

This subcommittee will meet on November 20<sup>th</sup> and work in conjunction with the committee formed by the Regional Selectboard.

H. School Building Committees

1. Holden – (J. Scott) – no report
2. Paxton – (J. Wentzell) – no report
3. Rutland – (J. Rokicki) – no report
4. Sterling – (S. Jordan) – no report

I. School Council Representatives: Central Tree Middle School – J. Nunnari, Chocksett – P. MacDonald; Davis Hill; Dawson – J. Scott; Houghton – S. Jordan; Mayo – C. Esperti; Mountview – J. James; Naquag – J. Rokicki; Paxton – A. Livdahl; Thomas Prince – S. Horeanopoulos; Wachusett Regional High School – E. Pape

No reports at this time. Two members reported that they were not receiving notification of meeting times. The Superintendent informed the Committee that the principals will again be reminded to include school committee representatives when notifying members of School Council meetings.

Member Kimberly Ferguson left the meeting at 8:10 PM.

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of report

A member asked if a response was sent to Carol Sullivan, a high school science teacher. The Superintendent reported that he does not answer correspondence not addressed to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent distributed a packet of information regarding the modular proposal (attachment 6). After requests from members, the Superintendent will provide the following additional information:

- Leasing worksheet explaining that leasing would be more costly than purchase.
- Information regarding the vendor.
- Information regarding enrollment – can the ninth graders stay at the middle schools?

Member Lowenthal reported that he had heard negative comments regarding the contractor on work in Boston. The Superintendent will follow-up on this information.

Chairman Rokicki asked if there was any input from towns regarding support of either proposal.

The Superintendent reminded the School Committee that designees could only speak on the incurring of debt article under State law.

The Superintendent reported that the following administrators will attend the town meetings, as designees of the Superintendent:

- Holden – Superintendent
- Paxton – Director Paul Soojian
- Princeton – Director Brian O’Connell
- Rutland – Principal Thomas Pandiscio
- Sterling – Director Philip Campbell

The following School Committee members will make the motions at town meetings:

- Holden Modular – D. Leith Inequities – K. Maxwell
- Paxton Modular – A. Livdahl Inequities – J. Wentzell
- Princeton Modular – S. Horeanopoulos Inequities – D. Lowenthal

- Rutland Modular – M. Gennert      Inequities – J. Rokicki
- Sterling Modular – Sterling representatives will get together, decide and inform the Superintendent

The Superintendent will again distribute copies of the motions for town meetings, prepared by District counsel.

Member Gennert asked the Superintendent to provide the costs of each member town for education from 1992 to the present and the percentage of education as a part of the entire town budget.

B. Recommendations requiring action by the School Committee

1. Motion: To schedule a Regular School Committee Meeting for December 10, 2001, with the one meeting agenda.  
(C. Esperti)  
(D. Leith)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Sherry Horeanopoulos  
Carol Esperti  
Michael Gennert  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Sarah Jordan  
Duncan Leith  
David Lowenthal  
Alice Livdahl  
Peter MacDonald  
John Nunnari  
Elizabeth Pape  
Julie Scott

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member Alice Livdahl left the meeting at 8:50 PM.



2. Acceptance of Naquag Project

Motion: To accept the Naquag Elementary School renovation project as complete for the purposes of receiving reimbursement and submitting an audit. The following items would be completed without reimbursement:

1. Replace particular concrete walkways;
2. Complete security system; and
3. Replace parking lot lighting.

(J. Nunnari)

(J. Gibbs)

Following discussion, the Superintendent requested that the issue be tabled until further information is available.

Motion: To table the motion until December 10, 2001 meeting.

(S. Jordan)

(C. Esperti)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Sherry Horeanopoulos  
Carol Esperti  
Michael Gennert  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Sarah Jordan  
Duncan Leith  
David Lowenthal  
Peter MacDonald  
John Nunnari  
Elizabeth Pape  
Julie Scott

Opposed:

(Motion passed unanimously)

3. Motion: To authorize the Superintendent to enter into a contract for up to five years for the services of District Auditors

(D. Leith)  
(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Sherry Horeanopoulos  
Carol Esperti  
Michael Gennert  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Sarah Jordan  
Duncan Leith  
David Lowenthal  
Peter MacDonald  
John Nunnari  
Elizabeth Pape  
Julie Scott

Opposed:

(Motion passed unanimously)

4. Motion: To authorize the Superintendent to enter into a contract for up to five years for the sole use of Pepsi Cola soft drink products at the high school

(D. Leith)  
(J. Gibbs)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Sherry Horeanopoulos  
Carol Esperti  
Michael Gennert  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Sarah Jordan  
Duncan Leith  
David Lowenthal  
Peter MacDonald  
John Nunnari  
Elizabeth Pape  
Julie Scott

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

5. Motion: To approve the request of the Town of Sterling to place an Additional Warrant Article on the December 4, 2001 meeting.

(S. Jordan)  
(P. MacDonald)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Sherry Horeanopoulos  
Carol Esperti  
Michael Gennert  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Sarah Jordan  
Duncan Leith  
David Lowenthal  
Peter MacDonald  
John Nunnari  
Elizabeth Pape  
Julie Scott

Opposed:

(Motion passed unanimously)

The Superintendent reported that the girls soccer team will be invited to the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. He wished Committee Members a Happy Thanksgiving.

VII. Public Hearing

No member of the public wished to speak.

VIII. Unfinished Business

- A. Tabled Motion: To amend the School Committee By-Laws, Article 3, Section 2 to read "Action of the Committee shall require a

majority vote OF THE MEMBERSHIP as defined by Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise specified by law, by the School Committee By-Laws, or by the Regional Agreement.”

No member requested that the motion be brought back on the table at this time.

IX. New Business

David Lowenthal asked the Committee to consider modulars as a permanent solution and to consider steel structure. He suggested that the modulars be located in the northern part of the District. He asked that the School Committee reconsider its previous motion to request town meeting action on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion followed with members expressing concern for lack of land and timing.

Motion: That in light of new information, the School Committee withdraw its proposal concerning modulars on the December 4<sup>th</sup> warrant.

(D. Lowenthal)  
(P. MacDonald)

Vote:

In favor:

David Lowenthal

Opposed:

John Rokicki  
Sherry Horeanopoulos  
Carol Esperti  
Michael Gennert  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Sarah Jordan  
Duncan Leith  
Peter MacDonald  
John Nunnari  
Elizabeth Pape  
Julie Scott

(Motion failed 1-11)

Chairman Rokicki distributed DRAFT High School Plan Questions (attachment 7). Chairman Rokicki asked the Committee when they will meet to continue the process. He indicated that there appeared to be no interest in pursuing the redefining of School Committee Goals and that the committee should focus on the permanent solution to the high school facility problems. The Superintendent suggested that both a Management Subcommittee meeting and a School Committee Meeting be posted for the same time. By consensus, a special School Committee meeting to continue the discussion regarding the high school facility long-term solution, and in particular, the questions distributed by Chairman Rokicki will be December 5<sup>th</sup> at the Media Center at the high school at 7:00 PM. Any members with comments should forward them to the Superintendent.

X. Motion: To adjourn

(C. Esperti)  
(S. Jordan)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Sherry Horeanopoulos  
Carol Esperti  
Michael Gennert  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Sarah Jordan  
Duncan Leith  
David Lowenthal  
Peter MacDonald  
John Nunnari  
Elizabeth Pape  
Julie Scott

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

ADT:ss/School Committee/Minutes