

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1031, Monday, December 10, 2001
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

John Rokicki, Chairman	Duncan Leith
Sherry Horeanopoulos, Vice-chairman	Alice Livdahl
Carol Esperti (7:20 PM)	David Lowenthal
Kimberly Ferguson	Peter MacDonald
Michael Gennert	Elizabeth Pape
Jeffrey Gibbs	Julie Scott
Sarah Jordan	Kathleen Singh

Committee Members Absent:

Donald Benson	Kelly Maxwell
Kenneth Fensin	John Nunnari
Jane James	

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*
Maureen Sullivan, Paxton
Ginny Belcher, Holden
Maureen Floryan, Holden
David Gibbs, Sterling
Susan Reynolds, Holden
Susan Schneeweiss, Sterling

Chairman Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM and turned the meeting over to the Superintendent who recognized of the 2001 State Champion Girls Soccer Team. Each player was introduced and given a citation in recognition of outstanding achievement as a member of the 2001 Wachusett Regional High School Girls Varsity Soccer Team.

Jessica Blatt, Captain, Holden
Andrea Comen, Captain, Princeton
Rebecca Ely, Captain, Paxton
Micaela Bayard, Princeton
Laurie Bernier, Holden
Jamie Blatt, Holden
Adrienne Carpenter, Princeton
Meaghan Creedon, Holden
Mary Kate Cunningham, Holden
Lyndsey DiGiorgio, Holden
Lindsay Dow, Holden
Kristen Dobson, Holden
Julie Fisher, Holden
Kristen Kelley, Jefferson
Rebecca Kerxhalli, Holden
Meaghan Lynch, Holden
Lauren Matysiak, Holden
Jillian Orciuch, Holden
Katie Trachimowicz, Princeton
Elizabeth Weaver, Sterling

The following were recognized for their outstanding coaching:

Richard Lindsten, Coach
Albert Bourget, Assistant Coach
Michael O'Malley, Assistant Coach

Captain Jessica Blatt read a prepared statement from the coach (attachment 1).

I. Public Hearing

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

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

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of the 1030th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on November 19, 2001 – approved by consensus
- B. Approval of the 228th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on December 3, 2001 – approved by consensus, with Member Carol Esperti requesting to abstain.
- C. Approval of the 229th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on December 5, 2001 -- approved by consensus, adding the words “high school facility solution” before “process” in the Motion on page 3, with Members Kimberly Ferguson, Jeffrey Gibbs, and Alice Livdahl requesting to abstain.

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

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

IV. Communications

Member Carol Esperti informed the Committee that she has been contacting school districts regarding school bus policies and will consolidate and share with the School Committee.

V. Committee Reports at the Discretion of the Chair

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

No report.

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

- 1. Motion: To adopt the 2002 School Committee Calendar, as presented

(C. Esperti)
(S. Horeanopoulos)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Sherry Horeanopoulos
Carol Esperti

Kimberly Ferguson
Michael Gennert
Jeffrey Gibbs
Sarah Jordan
Duncan Leith
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Peter MacDonald
Elizabeth Pape
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

2. The Superintendent distributed copies of 603 CMR 46.00 (attachment 4).

Discussion followed regarding the development of the policy, questions regarding training, and the state regulations.

Motion: To adopt DP5252 **Policy Relating to Personnel Management *Physical Restraint***, for the first reading, waiving the reading

(C. Esperti)

(D. Leith)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:
None
(Motion passed unanimously)

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

Member Alice Livdahl asked if a presentation to the subcommittee could be made regarding the new wording for special education. The Superintendent indicated that Director of Student/Information Services Philip Campbell, who is the most knowledgeable in the District, will accommodate her request.

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

Subcommittee Chairman Duncan Leith reviewed the meeting held on December 10, 2001. The subcommittee reviewed DP7141 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Inventory Control** and the policy will be brought forward to the full committee at the next meeting. The subcommittee discussed the Jefferson renovation project and by consensus believes that the issue does not need to be addressed further, due to the audits by the Department of Revenue and the District auditors and agrees with Sterling Selectman Remo Rossi's comments that "the issue was dead." The subcommittee reviewed the treasurer's evaluation and recommended that Martin Connors, Jr. be reappointed as treasurer. Subcommittee Chairman Leith requested that the School Committee go into executive session to discuss the terms of the contract, at the end of the meeting.

1. Motion: To reappoint Martin Connors, Jr. as Treasurer
(D. Leith)
(J. Gibbs)

Vote:
In favor:

John Rokicki
Sherry Horeanopoulos
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Michael Gennert
Jeffrey Gibbs

Sarah Jordan
Duncan Leith
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Peter MacDonald
Elizabeth Pape
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

2. Motion: To enter executive session, at the end of the meeting, not to return to public session, to discuss the employment contract for the Treasurer for calendar year 2002.

(D. Leith)

(C. Esperti)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Following concerns referred by a member about the expenses for the Jefferson renovation project, the Superintendent will provide a copy of a similar review for the Town of Holden for the transfer of property.

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

The next meeting will be posted for Wednesday, January 16, 2002 at Jefferson School.

The Superintendent requested that the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee discuss the establishment of a separate fund for technology, the establishment of which would be in the Regional Agreement.

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

This Ad-Hoc Subcommittee no longer exists and will be removed from the agenda.

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

Member Duncan Leith reported that the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee will be meeting on Tuesday, December 11, 2001 at Starbard Building, Holden, at 7:00 PM.

- H. Ad-Hoc Subcommittee to Review Facilitators (C. Esperti, S. Horeanopoulos, J. James, S. Jordan, P. MacDonald, J. Scott)

The position will be posted in the Central Register December 19, 2002. The bid opening will be January 2, 2002. The Ad-Hoc Subcommittee will review the bids on January 3, 2002. The interviews will take place on January 9, 2002. At the request of a school committee member the Superintendent agreed to email members of the ad-hoc subcommittee a copy of the language submitted to the Central Register.

- I. Ad-Hoc Subcommittee to Review District Goals (D. Benson, M. Gennert, S. Jordan, P. MacDonald, E. Pape,)

The Ad-hoc Subcommittee met on December 10, 2001 and has developed five main goals and several objectives under each goal. The next meeting will be on December 18, 2001 at the Sterling Library at 5:00 PM.

J. School Building Committees

1. Holden – (J. Scott)
2. Paxton –
3. Rutland – (J. Rokicki)
4. Sterling – (S. Jordan)

The building committee would like to fence in the playground and has been researching the funding.

- K. 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 School Committee members reported activities of their respective school councils. Member Sherry Horeanopoulos advised the Superintendent that she has not received notification of meeting times. The Superintendent will notify the principal.

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of report

The Committee discussed the distribution of emails, as the number is increasing. The practice should be consistent; members should copy the Superintendent or the Chairman if the issue involves School Committee business.

The Superintendent will share once again the District Attorney's opinion that email is a public record.

Director Campbell was recognized by a member for being named Outstanding Citizen by the American Association of Retarded Citizens.

The enrollment numbers for November 1999 Holden K-5 do not add up. The Superintendent informed the Committee that he

believed the Dawson number should have been 245 vs 545 but would review and advise the Committee.

A question was raised as to the vote count for the regional agreement change article. The Superintendent reported that some towns did not take a paper ballot, therefore there was no tabulation.

A question was raised as to the cost for communication regarding the modular classroom proposal and concern regarding untruths in the communications. The Superintendent reported that he has the executive authority and duty to support School Committee action and items that benefit the District. The Superintendent reported that transportation would have increased substantially if staggered/double sessions were needed and reimbursement for transportation is delayed one year. Reimbursement is only approximately 60%, not 100%. The Superintendent reported that the modular classroom proposal would not prevent the high school being put on probation, but rather to prevent it from losing accreditation.

The Superintendent reported that he would provide an accounting of the cost for distribution of materials to support the modular classroom proposal. He explained that the District does not have individual schools but rather work as a team. It is common practice to notify parents through the children of the importance of town meeting vote.

There was discussion regarding the NESDEC enrollment report and whether longer projections could be developed. The Superintendent reminded the Committee that Sally Von Benken of NESDEC reported to the Committee that projections beyond ten years were not reliable. The Superintendent pointed out the report on the transition grades. The counselors at middle schools have been reporting that the number of students taking entrance exams has dramatically increased.

After a committee member asked about the viability of another Rutland school, the Superintendent reported that all principals are reviewing the enrollment report and a report will be presented to the Business/Finance Subcommittee. A request for a timeline will be provided should a new school needed.

A question was asked regarding an item on Director O'Connell's report in regard to one of the maintenance items regarding the cafeteria at the high school. The Superintendent clarified that the only issue now surrounding the area around the cafeteria is the location of the underground tanks.

B. Recommendations requiring action by the School Committee

1. Recognition of the 2001 State Champion Girls Soccer Team.

See above.

2. Motion: To accept the Naquag School Renovation Project as operational and substantially complete.

(S. Jordan)

(D. Leith)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

2. Motion: To accept the Mayo Elementary School Project as operational and substantially complete.

(C. Esperti)

(P. Mac Donald)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

3. Motion: To reappropriate District FY02 funds as contained in the Superintendent's Report

(D. Leith)

(S. Jordan)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

4. Update on High School Modular Classroom proposal

The Superintendent updated the Committee on the following:

- The modulars may go in the front of the current high school if there is no additional expense to the District;
- Parking must be established prior to construction, which is scheduled for March 30, 2002;
- The District will be meeting once a week with the contractor;
- Financing options are being reviewed by the Treasurer and Comptroller – state rates; one year loans five year notes – The Treasurer can borrow 60 days after School committee vote of November 7, 2001;
- The contract is scheduled to be signed by December 20, 2001, with final designing, state review and fabrication to follow;
- The contractor will be looking for a place to store the modulars locally.

A question was asked as to whether the Town of Holden would waive the fees for permitting, etc. The Holden representatives will be meeting Monday, December 17, 2001 at 6:00 PM with the Holden Board of Selectmen and the subject will be brought up then.

VII. Public Hearing

No member of the public wished to speak.

VIII. Unfinished Business

A. Tabled 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:

3. Replace particular concrete walkways;
4. Complete security system; and
5. Replace parking lot lighting.

Motion: To remove the Motion from the table

(C. Esperti)
(J. Gibbs)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To take NO ~~not~~ action on the motion.

(C. Esperti)
(D. Leith)

Vote:

In favor:

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

Opposed:
None
(Motion passed unanimously)

IX. New Business

- A. Motion: to adopt the Resolution: The Wachusett Regional School District Committee extends its most sincere thanks to the voters of the District for their overwhelming support of the high school addition project. Your action will enable Wachusett Regional High School to maintain the high levels of accomplishment of which we are all so proud, while providing “breathing room” until a permanent solution can be approved. The School Committee pledges to keep the High School solution its top priority and invites all citizens of the District to participate in its formation.

In addition, the School Committee appreciates that the voters agree on the need to change the District’s funding formula. The revised formula is now part of the Regional Agreement, although its implementation awaits unanimous approval from the District’s towns. Meanwhile, the Committee will continue to work with selectboards, legislators, and other school districts to achieve a state-level resolution to the funding problem.

(M. Gennert)
(J. Gibbs)

Member Sarah Jordan left the meeting at 8:50 PM.

Motion: To substitute the motion by directing the chair to draft a thank you letter to the community on the School Committee’s behalf, which will be shared with Committee members prior to submittal to the media.

(M. Gennert)
(J. Gibbs)

Chairman Rokicki accepted the substitute motion by consensus.

- B. A question was raised as to why there was the need to change the language for the Regional Agreement amendment article and why was an emergency meeting necessary. The Superintendent reminded Committee members that the Committee had voted on the language. Basically the only change was to take “Chapter

70” out and add “state law” in its place. A concern was expressed regarding District Counsel Leo McCabe’s competency. The Superintendent reminded the Committee that the Committee voted on the advice of District Counsel, rather than Town of Holden Town Counsel.

- C. The issue of dress codes was brought up as a committee member who had received a call concerning the inappropriate dress of some students at the high school. Chairman Rokicki referred the issue to the Education Subcommittee. The Superintendent suggested that the School Committee would perhaps want to set up a community-wide process for establishing dress code, starting with School Councils.
- D. Member Duncan Leith reported that there would be warrants to be signed on December 21, 2001. Members Jeffrey Gibbs, Duncan Leith, and Julie Scott will serve as signers for the December 21, 2001 warrants.
- E. Motion: To have the Management Subcommittee look into District Counsel

(S. Horeanopoulos)
(C. Esperti)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Sherry Horeanopoulos
Carol Esperti
Kimberly Ferguson
Michael Gennert
Jeffrey Gibbs
Duncan Leith
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Peter MacDonald
Elizabeth Pape
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

A question was raised as to how does the District protect against theft or embezzlement. A checks and balances process is in place. The Superintendent shared with the Committee that three separate systems: cash reconciliation, general ledger, and the actual checkbook have to balance and that all but amounts.

Member David Lowenthal left the meeting at 9:30 PM.

- E. A member reminded the Chairman that attempts should be made to discourage personal attacks during the public session of the meetings.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned to enter executive session at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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