

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1085, Tuesday December 14, 2004
7:00 PM

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Duncan Leith, Chair	John Kane
Donald Benson, Vice-chair	Alice Livdahl
Cynthia Bazinet	Natalie Mello
Charles Capparelli	John Nunnari
Clifford Connell	Norman Plourde
Patricia Gates (7:22 PM)	Cheryl Rauh (7:05 PM)
David Gibbs	Margaret Watson

Committee Members Absent:

Elizabeth Brennan	Kelly Maxwell
Mark James	Michael Sherman

Administration Present:

Paul K. Soojian, Deputy Superintendent and Director of Operations
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services
Peter Brennan, Comptroller
Susan H. Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Others present, who desired to be recorded as present (see attached Attendance Sheet – attachment 1)

Chair Duncan Leith called the meeting to order and informed the Committee that he would take Item V, B, 1 *Member Towns/District Governmental Funds & Fiduciary Funds Fund Balance Report* out of order. Deputy Superintendent and Director of Operations Paul Soojian introduced Comptroller Peter Brennan who reviewed the *Member Towns/District Governmental Funds & Fiduciary Funds* via a PowerPoint presentation (attachment 2). Back-up data from the Department of Revenue for each of the Member Towns was also distributed (attachment 3).

Following the presentation, discussion occurred regarding the presentation. Following inquiry, Comptroller Brennan explained that interest would be earned

on Member Town Enterprise Funds but opined that the interest earned would be kept in the particular fund.

At the request of Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello, Chair Duncan Leith addressed Item IV, *D Report of the Business/Finance Subcommittee.*

D. Business/Finance Subcommittee

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello reported that the Business/Finance Subcommittee met on December 6, 2004. Subcommittee Chair Mello summarized the meeting and reported that the Subcommittee discussed in detail the issue of regional transportation. She reported that the notion brought forward by Princeton Selectboard Chair Stanley Moss that the town is responsible for transportation is not accurate. As was explained to the Subcommittee, regional school districts must transport students and then apply for reimbursement. Chair Duncan Leith agreed to correspond with Princeton Selectboard Chair Stanley Moss to provide information regarding regional transportation.

Subcommittee Chair Mello reported that the Business/Finance Subcommittee agreed that educational values must drive the budget. She reported that the Subcommittee discussed a proposed meeting with representatives from the Member Towns. The Subcommittee originally scheduled the meeting for December 15, 2004 but since the Subcommittee did not yet have the authority to meet with the representatives of the Member Towns, the meeting would be rescheduled for December 21, 2004.

Motion: That the Business/Finance Subcommittee invite one representative from each of the Member Towns for a single agenda item meeting on December 21, 2004. The purpose of the meeting is to establish agreement on the data sets to use during the budget process, those data sets to include information from the Department of Revenue (DOR) for the Member Towns and the Department of Education (DOE) for the District. For FY05, the information used will be from published budget information for FY05

(N. Mello)
(D. Gibbs)

Concern was expressed regarding the date of the meeting, considering the holiday season.

Member Patricia Gates offered a friendly amendment to change the date to Tuesday, January 4, 2005; the friendly amendment was accepted by Members Natalie Mello and David Gibbs.

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Cynthia Bazinet
Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Cheryl Rauh
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Chair Duncan Leith expressed concern that meetings are being scheduled and are unable to be convened due to a lack of a quorum. He requested that Members contact the Chair of the Subcommittee or the Superintendent if unable to attend a meeting.

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair reported that the Subcommittee discussed the upcoming retreat. The Subcommittee has expressed concern that four hours is not sufficient to complete the work of prioritizing the standards in preparation for the upcoming budget season. The Subcommittee also decided, by consensus, that a facilitator would be helpful and that a volunteer from one of the Member Towns could be asked to facilitate, in order to control costs.

Chair Leith reported that the Retreat is scheduled for Saturday, January 22, 2005, from 8:00 AM – noon in the Hagglund Room, Canmpus Center, at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Mello reported that the Business/Finance Subcommittee is gathering information for the Retreat and will meet to discuss a process in advance of the date of the Retreat

Deputy Superintendent Paul Soojian asked what criteria was being considered for the facilitator and that if the District was to seek out a facilitator, there is not enough time to conduct a search prior to the date of the Retreat, unless the Committee decided to do so prior to the end of the Committee meeting. Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Mello will address this issue with Chair Leith and Deputy Superintendent Paul Soojian.

Following inquiry as to the involvement of the Education Subcommittee, Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Mello reported that the goals are not being changed, but will be prioritized. Following inquiry from a Member, Deputy Superintendent reported that the standards that were prioritized at the January 2004 Retreat were the School Committee Goals.

Member David Gibbs left the meeting at 8:00 PM.

I. Public Hearing

No member of the public wished to speak.

Chair Duncan Leith announced that the high school had a very successful fall athletic season; every team that was eligible for district fall playoffs actually participated. The boys and girls cross country team won; the football team won its second Super Bowl in two years. In addition, Chair Leith noted the contributions of students in music and the arts. Chair Leith thanked the students, coaches, and advisors.

II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 1084th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on November 22, 2004 – approved by consensus

- B. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on November 22, 2004 – approved by consensus, to be released when the matter has concluded, with Members Alice Livdahl and Natalie Mello abstaining.
- C. Approval of the 257th Special Meeting of the WRSD Committee held on December 9, 2004 – approved by consensus, with Members Cynthia Bazinet, Clifford Connell, Natalie Mello, John Nunnari, and Cheryl Rauh abstaining.

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 Deputy Superintendent and Director of Operations; 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)

No report.

- 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 meeting is scheduled to meet at 5:30 PM Thursday, December 16, 2004, in the Superintendent's Conference Room at Central Office. Chair Leith reported that the meeting would not last beyond 7:00 PM.

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

Education Subcommittee Chair Margaret Watson reported that due to scheduling conflicts, the December Education Subcommittee meeting was canceled. The next Education Subcommittee meeting will be scheduled following consultation with membership.

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

See above.

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

Chair Duncan Leith reported that for the second time the Subcommittee could not be called to order due to a lack of a quorum. He again urged Members to notify the Subcommittee Chairs if unable to attend meetings.

No date for the next meeting of the Community Outreach Subcommittee has been set.

- 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 Subcommittee is recommending that the School Committee request the administration to develop and issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for consulting services for the selection of a Superintendent.

Motion: That the School Committee request that the administration send out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for consulting services for selection of a Superintendent, as soon as possible and that the RFP be sent at least to NESDEC, MASC, and Future Management Consulting Services. The date for submission of the RFP's will be determined by the administration

(N. Plourde)

(C. Capparelli)

Following inquiry, Chair Leith reported that the Superintendent is the Chief Procurement Officer and to deviate from the Superintendent acting in this capacity, the District would be required to file a change with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Director of Administrative Services explained the differences between a Request for Proposals and IFB. The RFP process does not address the cost for services until a vendor has been selected, through established criteria.

Deputy Superintendent Paul Soojian advised the School Committee that the RFP could be brought back to the School Committee for approval prior to being issued. It was the consensus of the School Committee that this was not necessary and that the RFP should be issued as soon as possible.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Cynthia Bazinet
Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Cheryl Rauh
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

John Kane

(Motion passed 12-1)

G. Building Committees

1. High School

Chair Leith reported that the next Building Committee meeting is scheduled for December 22, 2004. The Building Committee remains concerned about the use of contingency funds during the site preparation portion of the project. Chair Leith assured the School Committee that the Building Committee is being very diligent in

reviewing each changeorder request before approval. Chair Leith advised the School Committee that beginning in January the Building Committee will be meeting twice a month, rather than once a month. Following a suggestion made by a Member, Chair Leith reported that he would suggest to the Building Committee that the School Committee should be updated periodically by the Chair of the Building Committee, the architect, and/or the project management firm.

Following inquiry, Deputy Superintendent Paul Soojian advised the School Committee that \$2.72 million of the contingency fund has already been approved but that \$1.25 million of that amount was add-alternates, approved by the Building Committee at the beginning of the project.

Following inquiry regarding the disposal of the modular cafeteria, Deputy Superintendent Paul Soojian advised the Committee that the disposal is now in the hands of the Building Committee but that a review of the contract documents is being done to determine if the cost for disposal is already included as part of the project.

2. Rutland – Naquag/Central Tree

No report.

3. Rutland – Elementary School – John Nunnari

Member John Nunnari reported that the Rutland voters unanimously approved the additional funding. Member Nunnari reported that Member Elizabeth Brennan is now the representative to the Rutland Building Committee.

4. Sterling

H. School Council Reports: Central Tree Middle School (C. Rauh), Chocksett Middle School (C. Capparelli), 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).

Member Margaret Watson reported that the Mayo School Council was scheduled to meeting on December 13, 2004 but did not convene due to a lack of a quorum.

Following inquiry, Deputy Superintendent Paul Soojian explained that, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, school councils cannot be involved in issues regarding collective bargaining; therefore a survey of parents or teachers regarding provisions of the agreement should not be conducted by school councils. When asked if a PTA could conduct a survey, Deputy Superintendent Soojian advised that he would check and get back to the Committee.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Following an inquiry from a Member regarding the safety plan at the high school, Deputy Superintendent Paul Soojian advised the Committee that the safety plan did take into consideration the new high school and that many of the issues would be eliminated when the project is completed.

B. Presentations

1. *Member Towns/District Governmental Funds & Fiduciary Funds Fund Balance Report*

See above.

C. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

1. Approval of the 2005/2006 School Calendar

Deputy Superintendent Paul Soojian advised the Committee that the only change in the calendar from the current year was the scheduling of the fall Professional Development Day at the beginning of new year, due to training needed on the new personnel software system.

Motion: To approve the 2005/2006 School Calendar (attachment 4)

(N. Mello)

(C. Capparelli)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Cynthia Bazinet
Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Cheryl Rauh

Opposed:

Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 12-1)

2. Approval of Request for Exemption from Provisions of Policy P3321.1 **Policy Relating to Education *Field Trips Involving Late Night or Overnight Travel***, Subject to Parental Notification of Absence of CORI

Motion: To approve the foreign travel request for exemption from the provisions of Policy P3321.1 **Policy Relating to Education *Field Trips Involving Late Night or Overnight Travel***, subject to parental notification of the absence of CORI for the two trips in April 2005 (attachment 5).

(A. Livdahl)

(J. Nunnari)

There was extensive discussion regarding the need for an exemption from provisions of the policy. When asked whether the trips were school sponsored or school sanctioned, Deputy Superintendent Paul Soojian advised the Committee that the District has received legal opinions regarding trips that are organized at the school. These trips are organized by the school, the students must adhere

to school discipline rules and therefore the trips are school sponsored.

Member Clifford Connell left the meeting at 9:07 P.M.

Member Patricia Gates offered a friendly amendment that would require a release and consent for parents to sign and that students would not be allowed to operate a motor vehicle while in the foreign country. The friendly amendment was accepted by Members Alice Livdahl and John Nunnari.

Discussion continued on whether a separate policy should be developed which addressed foreign travel, as the issues for foreign travel are uniquely different than issues regarding travel within the United States.

Motion: To table the motion and have the Chair refer the document to the appropriate subcommittee

(J. Kane)

(N. Mello)

Vote:

In favor:

Cynthia Bazinet
Charles Capparelli
John Kane
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Cheryl Rauh
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Patricia Gates
Alice Livdahl
Norman Plourde

(Motion passed 7-5)

Motion: To reconsider the motion to table

(J. Kane)

(C. Bazinet)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Cynthia Bazinet
Charles Capparelli
Patricia Gates
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Cheryl Rauh

Opposed:

Natalie Mello
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 10-2)

Roll call vote on original motion, that reads: To approve the foreign travel request for exemption from the provisions of Policy P3321.1 **Policy Relating to Education *Field Trips Involving Late Night or Overnight Travel***, subject to parental notification of the absence of CORI for the two trips in April 2005 and that the School Committee would require a release and consent for parents to sign and that students would not be allowed to operate a motor vehicle, while in the foreign country

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Cynthia Bazinet
Patricia Gates
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Cheryl Rauh

Opposed:

Charles Capparelli
Natalie Mello
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 9-3)

3. Adoption of AP4714.5 **Policy Relating to
Budget/Finance *Audit Report***

Chair Duncan Leith referred the policy to the
Business/Finance Subcommittee.

VI. Public Hearing

No member of the public wished to speak.

VII. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

VIII. New Business

Member Donald Benson announced his resignation from the School Committee as he is moving out of the state. Member Benson thanked the School Committee for their cooperation; Chair Duncan Leith thanked Member Benson for his service to the District and the students.

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn

(C. Capparelli)
(N. Mello)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Cynthia Bazinet
Charles Capparelli
Patricia Gates
John Kane
Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Cheryl Rauh

Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul K. Soojian
Deputy Superintendent and Director of Operations

PKS:ss/School Committee/Minutes