

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Executive Session, Monday November 8, 2004
8:30 PM

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Duncan Leith, Chair	Alice Livdahl
Cynthia Bazinet	Kelly Maxwell
Elizabeth Brennan	Natalie Mello
Charles Capparelli	John Nunnari
Clifford Connell	Norman Plourde
Patricia Gates	Cheryl Rauh
David Gibbs	Michael Sherman
Mark James	Margaret Watson

Committee Members Absent:

Donald Benson, Vice-chair	René Rodriguez
John Kane	

Administration Present:

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Paul K. Soojian, Director of Operations
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services

Chair Duncan Leith called the meeting to order at 8:30 PM. Chair Leith turned over the executive session to the Superintendent, who introduced Naomi Stonberg, District Counsel for collective bargaining.

I. Review of Timeline of Contracts

The Superintendent distributed a copy of the *Timeline for Collectively Bargained Contracts* (attachment 1).

II. Current Status of Negotiations

The Superintendent reviewed the current status of negotiations for each bargaining unit.

III. Health Insurance Impacts

The Superintendent distributed and reviewed an analysis of *Health Benefit as % of Total Costs of Salary & Benefits* (attachment 2). The Superintendent noted that the percentage change was equivalent to non-negotiated increased personnel costs. Committee members and Attorney Stonberg discussed alternative health options including lower co-pays, cafeteria approaches, and non-participation incentive plans. Also discussed was the possibility of a pre-tax, non-administration fee approach. The Superintendent indicated a review would be made as to cost benefit of any of these approaches.

IV. Comparison of Contracts from Surrounding Communities

The Superintendent distributed copies of the result of a *Survey of Contracts for Various Work Groups*, which compares salaries and benefits for Aides, Cafeteria, Administrators, Custodians, Clerical, and Nurses (attachment 3). The Superintendent reviewed the document as related to each of the Collective Bargaining units noting how the District's salary package compared to those on the survey. The Superintendent informed the Committee that the survey would be updated to include Quabbin and Gardner, which submitted their responses late.

The Committee discussed the comparative salaries for each of the six bargaining units. In response to a Committee member request, Attorney Stonberg indicated the most recent settlements in the area were in the range of 3% per year, some being 2 – 2 ½% and others 4%.

V. Proposals from Unions

A. Wachusett Cafeteria Association

The Superintendent distributed a copy of the latest proposal from the Wachusett Cafeteria Association (attachment 4).

B. Teamsters Local #170 (Aides)

The Superintendent distributed a copy of the latest proposal from the Teamsters Local #170 (Aides) (attachment 5).

VI. Update – WREA Desire to Begin Negotiations

The Superintendent informed the Committee that the WREA had inquired to the possibility of beginning negotiations. Due to the action of the Committee which created a lame duck Superintendent and the unknown future, the Superintendent informed the Committee that he has informed the WREA that this was not possible due to the number of other Collective Bargaining agreements up for negotiation.

VII. Role of School Committee – Interest-based Bargaining

The Superintendent discussed the need for the Committee, in light of the current status of negotiations and the unavailability of any funds for contracts, to begin participating in the negotiation process. The Superintendent indicated that there are alternatives to adversarial negotiations such as interest-based bargaining. The Superintendent then deferred to Attorney Stonberg, who distributed an overview of the collective bargaining process and reviewed with the Committee the basic tenants of collective bargaining and discussed the options of “traditional” versus “interest-based” bargaining (attachment 6). The Superintendent advised that since there would be a change in the superintendency, that it might be time for the Committee to become more involved in the negotiation process with the Collective Bargaining Units and that it might also be the time to try a new negotiation strategy.

VIII. Direction of School Committee

The Committee discussed possible scenarios in approaching negotiations. The Committee agreed by consensus to schedule another executive session for the November 22, 2004 meeting to further discuss negotiation strategies.

The Superintendent informed the Committee that he would provide information on the status quo to restoration budget for FY06 as well as providing information on the Member Towns’ growth in stabilization account funds in order for the Committee to better understand the necessary strategies.

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn

(Natalie Mello)
(Charles Capparelli)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
CYNTHIA Cheryl Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
Alice Livdahl
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Cheryl Rauh
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

(Motion passed unanimously)

The executive session adjourned at 10:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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