

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #256 Thursday, June 3, 2004  
5:30 PM

Modular Cafeteria  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

Duncan Leith, Chair	John Kane
Donald Benson, Vice-chair	Alice Livdahl
Cynthia Bazinet	Natalie Mello
Elizabeth Brennan	John Nunnari
Clifford Connell	Norman Plourde
Patricia Gates	René Rodriguez
David Gibbs	Michael Sherman
Mark James	Margaret Watson

*Committee Members Absent:*

Charles Capparelli	Kelly Maxwell
Cheryl Rauh	Patricia Young

*Administration Present:*

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools  
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services  
Susan Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

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

I. Call to Order

Chair Duncan Leith called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.  
Chair Leith referred to Robert's Rules of Order to explain to the Committee that the Tabled Motion must be addressed by the body before any other motion on the same topic may be raised.

- II. Tabled Motion: To reduce the Member Town assessments by \$1,000,000, issue new assessment letters, and that said funds not to come from E&D.

Motion: To remove the motion from the table

(M. Sherman)

(R. Rodriguez)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Clifford Connell  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
John Kane  
Alice Livdahl  
Kelly Maxwell  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
René Rodriguez  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion before the Committee: To reduce the Member Town assessments by \$1,000,000, issue new assessment letters, and that said funds not to come from E&D.

Substitute Motion: To reduce the Member Town assessments by \$900,000, issue new assessment letters, and that said funds not to come from E&D, said motion contingent upon at least three of the remaining Member Towns which have yet to approve the District's budget, agree by voted positions of town Selectboards to approve the new assessments without any override contingencies.

(M. James)

(D. Gibbs)

The Superintendent advised the Committee that there are already three towns with the full School Committee appropriation on the agenda.

Discussion continued regarding the need to settle the budget.

Motion to Amend: To delete the language “said motion contingent upon at least three of the remaining Member Towns which have yet to approve the District’s budget, agree by voted positions of town Selectboards to approve the new assessments without any override contingencies.”

(P. Gates)

(M. Sherman)

Following inquiry on whether the District could use the additional State revenues if the appropriation is not amended, the Superintendent advised the Committee that the only funds with flexibility are transportation reimbursement funds. Circuit Breaker reimbursement funds are placed into special account to offset tuition, by an act of the legislature. The District will not know until August 2004 what amount the District will receive from the State for FY04.

The Superintendent advised the Committee that through the good work of Representative Lewis Evangelidis, the concerns expressed by the Superintendent at the previous School Committee meeting have been resolved and that \$900,000 is a reasonable figure.

Chair Duncan Leith recognized Princeton Selectboard Chair Stanley Moss and Selectboard Member Alan Sentkowski, speaking as a duly posted board. They shared with the Committee that a warrant has been drafted, which does not include a contingency. Chair Moss advised the Committee that if a new assessment letter is in hand on June 4, 2004 in the morning, an emergency Selectboard meeting will be called and a warrant signed, with no contingency.

School Committee representatives from Paxton reported that most likely Paxton would get on board without a contingency requirement.

Chair Duncan Leith reported to the Committee that because of citizen petitions, both Holden and Sterling have no contingency attached. However, it was reported that the Holden Finance Committee voted to

not reduce the municipal budget and once again is asking the School Committee to reduce the assessments by \$1.4 million, not just \$900,000.

Member Patricia Gates distributed a copy of an email from Representative Lewis Evangelidis; the numbers were confirmed by Senator Harriette Chandler (attachment 2).

The Superintendent distributed copies of the updated Scoreboard (attachment 3). The Superintendent advised the Committee that there are differences between what Representative Evangelidis has reported and what the Department of Revenue (DOR) and Department of Education (DOE) are reporting. As included on the Scoreboard, the House bill would return \$1,036,697 to the District and the Senate bill would return \$885,534 to the District. The School Committee had previously committed to give the net back to the towns. The Superintendent advised the Committee once again that \$900,000 is a reasonable number. The Superintendent advised the Committee to decide, to not prolong this debate, and to be unified as a Committee.

Following inquiry regarding unforeseen circumstances, the Superintendent advised the Committee that in regards to the Hancock case, no final decision has yet been made and that any decision would not impact the FY05 budget but could impact the FY06 budget. The Superintendent advised the Committee, further, that this year both houses have the same language regarding funding for the District except for Charter School reimbursement.

Roll call vote on Motion to Amend:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Clifford Connell  
Patricia Gates  
John Kane  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
René Rodriguez  
Michael Sherman

Opposed:

David Gibbs  
Mark James  
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 13-3)

The Superintendent distributed correspondence from District Counsel Leo McCabe regarding the requirement for a two-thirds vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 16B (attachment 4).

Roll call vote on Motion, as amended, which reads: To reduce the Member Town assessments by \$900,000, issue new assessment letters, and that said funds not to come from E&D.

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Clifford Connell  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
John Kane  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
René Rodriguez  
Michael Sherman

Opposed:

Mark James  
Margaret Watson

(Motion 14-2)

The Superintendent asked the Committee to consider canceling the June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting and consider the only action item at this meeting (attachment 5):

Motion: To authorize the Wachusett Regional School District Treasurer, acting under the provisions of Massachusetts General Law,

Chapter 71, Section 16(g) as amended by Chapter 134 of the Acts of 1972, and with the approval of the Chairman of the District Committee, to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of revenue, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2004 and to issue a note or notes therefore, payable within one year, in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 44, Section 17.

(N. Mello)  
(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Clifford Connell  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
John Kane  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
René Rodriguez  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To cancel the June 7, 2004 Regular School Committee meeting

(N. Mello)  
(J. Kane)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan

Clifford Connell  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
John Kane  
Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
René Rodriguez  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello reported to the Committee that the Business/Finance Subcommittee Meeting scheduled for June 15, 2004 has also been canceled.

The Superintendent advised the Committee that he would be scheduling a New Member Orientation and would like some input from the new members.

### III. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn

(N. Mello)  
(D. Benson)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Clifford Connell  
Patricia Gates  
David Gibbs  
Mark James  
John Kane

Alice Livdahl  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
René Rodriguez  
Michael Sherman  
Margaret Watson

Opposed:  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

ADT:ss/School Committee/Minutes