

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #236 Monday, August 5, 2002

7:00 PM

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

John Rokicki, Chairman	Kelly Maxwell (9:05 PM)
Duncan Leith, Vice-Chairman	Natalie Mello
Donald Benson	John Nunnari
David Fedeli	Julie Scott (7:12 PM)
Kimberly Ferguson	Kathleen Singh
Alice Livdahl	Tammy Tod
David Lowenthal	Margaret Watson
Jane James	Patricia Young

Committee Members Absent:

Carol Esperti	Peter MacDonald
Jeffrey Gibbs	Edwin Twarog

Administration Present:

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Philip E. Campbell, Director of Student/Information Services
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services
Susan Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Others Present:

Ria Megnan, *The Landmark*
Joseph Sullivan, Chair Holden Selectboard
Joseph Giotta, Holden Finance Committee
David Gibbs, Sterling
Maureen Floryan, Holden
Larry Floryan, Holden
Mark James, Holden
Norman Plourde, Sterling
Jeffrey Wentzell, Paxton

Debbie Croucher, Sterling
Susan Marsh, Holden
Richard Maurer, Holden
Rosann Silver, Holden
Donna Dominguez, Sterling
Melinda Johnson, Paxton
John Schneeweis, Sterling
Karen Monfreda, Sterling
Tom Valeri, Sterling
Susan Jane Arntz, Holden
Meg Floryan, Holden
Rick Mornar, Sterling
Laura Fyfe, Sterling
Catie Croucher, Sterling
Shannon Smith, Holden
Gregory Fyfe, Sterling
Donna Halloran, Sterling
Janis Pancare, Sterling
Bonnie Shayler, Sterling
Nancy Volk, Sterling
Sue Gibbs, Sterling
Catie Thorp, Holden

I. Call to Order

Chairman John Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM

II. Public Session

Mark James, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 1).

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

Bill Theurkauf, Sterling, reported that he works for UMASS analyzing data. He encouraged the Committee to work towards smaller community, preferably a school within a school. There are advantages to a large school, including a comprehensive curriculum. In relatively affluent communities, as size of schools increase, achievement increases. In urban schools, the opposite is true. He indicated that he would share the report, which he reported has not been refuted.

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

John Schneeweis, Sterling, commented to the Committee on violence at Wachusett and other high schools across the country. Fear mongering will not solve the problem. He asked that the Committee deal with truth only, not fabrications.

Norman Plourde, Sterling, read a prepared statement (attachment 4)

Joseph Sullivan, Holden, commended the Committee on its action of hiring a facilitator. He expressed concern at first on the choice of facilitator. The facilitators have worked diligently, independently. He congratulated some Committee members for putting opinions aside to take a fresh look. He urged the Committee to listen to the facilitators.

Joseph Giotta, Holden, commented on Member Alice Livdahl's comments included in the Superintendent's report. He disputed her opinion as not based on fact. He stated that the only solution based on fact and research is the small school approach.

Donna Dominguez, Sterling, urged the Committee to listen to the facilitators because the same arguments are being espoused. The economy is the biggest consideration in the next proposal. She requested that the Committee go to the community with several options and then go for the final vote.

Melinda Johnson, Paxton, responded that Member Alice Livdahl was presenting her opinion and not disputing other members. She reminded the Committee that the Committee is a regional committee and needs to think as a region.

Debbie Croucher, Sterling, reported that she heard inconsistencies at a prior meeting, in particular, what is the Committee's objective. If the Committee is looking for a different facility, then address the facility. She indicated that the Committee has created an entire group of disenfranchised people who will not vote for any proposal. She is disillusioned with the Committee as there is no progress.

Chairman John Rokicki closed the public hearing and thanked the members of the public who spoke.

III. Discussion Regarding the Permanent High School Facility Solution

Chairman Rokicki turned over the meeting to Michael Daley and Dr. Edward Tynan from Financial Advisory Associates, Inc., associated with Strekalovsky & Hoit, Inc., and Eugene Raymond from Strekalovsky & Hoit, Inc. Michael Daley reviewed the process for the evening. Four attachments were distributed:

- *Land Value Analysis* (attachment 5)

The consultants used \$20,000 per acre for analysis purposes.

- *Space Needs Study* (attachment 6)

This handout proposed project schedules. The Superintendent asked when the facilitators were estimating reimbursement begins. They indicated that a seven-year Bond Anticipated Notes (BAN) would be used. The Superintendent emphasized that this date is critical. The facilitators agreed to include this date in the next set of models.

A question was raised as to why one year was being used to acquire land. The Superintendent reported that the process took some time when going out for land before, because of engineering surveys, state review and architectural acceptance.

- *Comparative Cost Analysis (With Inflation Adjustments)* (attachment 7).

This report is in order of options.

- *Comparative Cost Analysis (With Inflation Adjustments)* (attachment 8).

This report is in order of cost, comparing similar cost proposals.

Chairman Rokicki asked for clarifications on some of the land items. There are some mathematical errors, which will be corrected.

Following a question on incremental operating costs, Michael Daley responded that net school spending is the issue whether one school or two schools are operated. The Committee would have to justify to the community for incremental costs for operating budgets. He indicated that the facilitators will spend some time on this issue but not a lot of time.

Following inquiry regarding the cost for the community, the Superintendent reminded the Committee that the cost would be born by the population of the previous year. The facilitators reminded the Committee that a decision needs to be made by the Committee as to whether choice will be an option for students.

The facilitators agreed that in Option A4, core facilities need not be duplicated; cost estimates will be provided.

Motion: Any school solution shall allow for District choice for B, C, and D scenarios

(K. Singh)
(D. Lowenthal)

Motion: To move the question

(N. Mello)

The motion died due to lack of a second.

Motion: To move the question

(N. Mello)
(A. Livdahl)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari

Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
David Lowenthal

(Motion passed 15-1)

Roll call vote on the main motion:

In favor:
John Rokicki
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Kelly Maxwell
David Lowenthal
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Patricia Young

Opposed:
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Margaret Watson

(Motion failed 8-8)

Chairman Rokicki scheduled the next meeting for August 26, 2002 where the pros and cons will be discussed. Community financial impacts will also be made available.

IV. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(J. Nunnari)
(N. Mello)

Vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki
Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
David Fedeli
Kimberly Ferguson
Jane James
Alice Livdahl
David Lowenthal
Kelly Maxwell
Natalie Mello
John Nunnari
Julie Scott
Kathleen Singh
Tammy Tod
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously).

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

ADT:ss schoolcommittee/minutes