

**WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE**  
**HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING**

Minutes

Special Meeting #245 Monday, December 30, 2002

7:00 PM

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

John Rokicki, Chairman	Jane James
Duncan Leith, Vice-Chairman	Natalie Mello
Donald Benson	John Nunnari
Carol Esperti	Julie Scott
David Fedeli	Margaret Watson
Kimberly Ferguson	Patricia Young
Jeffrey Gibbs	

*Committee Members Absent:*

Alice Livdahl	Kelly Maxwell
Peter MacDonald	Tammy Tod

*Administration Present:*

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools  
Susan H. Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

*Others Present:*

Linda Lehans, *The Landmark*  
Marc Sanguinetti, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*  
Joseph Sullivan, Chair, Holden Selectboard  
Maureen Floryan, Holden  
Larry Floryan, Holden  
David Gibbs, Sterling  
Mark James, Holden

I. Call to Order

Chairman Rokicki called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

II. Rutland Elementary Project

- A. Motion to Rescind: That the Wachusett Regional School Committee rescind its vote taken on November 25, 2002, appropriating the sum of \$18,600,000 for the construction of a new K-5 school facility for the Town of Rutland by the District incurring debt and requesting Special Town Meetings for approval of the debt by the member towns:

That contingent upon approval of bond counsel, without substantive changes, that the sum of \$18,600,000 is appropriated for the construction of a new K-5 school facility for the Town of Rutland to accommodate approximately 563 students on the existing Central Tree School facility site and for architectural, engineering and other costs related to the project, and that this appropriation be raised by incurring debt by the issuance of bonds and notes under Chapter 462 of the Acts of 1977, Section 16 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, and Section 15 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement, and to that end, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Regional District School Committee, be authorized to issue bonds or notes therefore; that pursuant to Section 15.3 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement it is hereby determined that the approval of said debt by member towns shall be by vote taken at special town meetings with vote counts by printed yes/no ballots and to authorize the Superintendent to enter into and execute all contracts necessary or material to such work and to act or do anything relative thereto, and to adopt the following warrant article:

*To see if the voters of the member towns of the Wachusett Regional School District will approve the borrowing of \$18,600,000 for the construction of a new K-5 school facility for the Town of Rutland to accommodate approximately 563 students on the existing Central Tree School facility site and for architectural, engineering and other costs related to the project, and that this*

*appropriation be raised by incurring debt by the issuance of bonds and notes under Chapter 462 of the Acts of 1977, Section 16 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, and Section 15 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement, and to that end, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Regional District School Committee, be authorized to issue bonds or notes therefore; that pursuant to Section 15.3 of the Amended Wachusett Regional School District Agreement it is hereby determined that the approval of said debt by member towns shall be by vote taken at special town meetings with vote counts by printed yes/no ballots and to authorize the Superintendent to enter into and execute all contracts necessary or material to such work and to act or do anything relative thereto*

(J. Nunnari)

(J. Gibbs)

Chairman Rokicki explained that this would enable Rutland to pay for the construction of the school buildings, a process identical to the process used in Holden, Paxton, Rutland, and Sterling. The Superintendent explained that the need for a change was due to concerns experienced with the high school issue and the general political environment. In addition, there would be no apparent incentive for non-Rutland townspeople to participate in a Rutland issue Special Town Meeting.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
David Fedeli  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Jane James  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Margaret Watson

Patricia Young

Opposed:  
Carol Esperti

(Motion passed 12-1)

- B. Motion to Authorize New School Facility in Town of Rutland with Debt Incurred by Town of Rutland: That the Wachusett Regional District School Committee authorize the construction of a new K-5 school facility for the Town of Rutland at an estimated construction cost of \$17,725,000 to accommodate approximately 563 students on the existing Central Tree School facility site and, further that the incurring of indebtedness for said school building project be incurred by the Town of Rutland, which construction project shall be contingent upon the approval by the Massachusetts Department of Education for eligibility and reimbursement through the School Building Assistance Program, and further provided, that the Town of Rutland and the Wachusett Regional School District enter into an Intermunicipal Agreement which shall provide that the Town of Rutland finance, construct, and lease to the District the new school facility upon terms that assure the District exclusive jurisdiction and control over the school and the land on which it is sited, and that upon payment of the debt incurred by the Town of Rutland for the original construction of said school, the Town shall convey such school facility and land appurtenant thereto to the District for the sum of \$1.00.

(J. Gibbs)  
(J. Nunnari)

Chairman Rokicki acknowledged Douglas Briggs, Chair of the Rutland Selectboard, who explained the possibility of the site being other than the Central Tree site. He explained that a subcommittee has been formed and that the owner of property on Glenwood Drive is interested in selling their property. This property abuts town owned property which houses the senior center and community center.

The Superintendent expanded and explained that the Central Tree site can be voted, be submitted to the Department of Education, and then changed, if a new site is more appropriate. This same

process happened in Holden, when the elementary school site changed from the Bubar site to the current Davis Hill site after state submission.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
David Fedeli  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Jane James  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Carol Esperti  
Kimberly Ferguson

(Motion passed 11-2)

- C. Motion to Enter into a New Intermunicipal Agreement: That the Wachusett Regional District School Committee accept and enter into an Intermunicipal Agreement between the Town of Rutland and the Wachusett Regional School District.

(J. Gibbs)

(J. Nunnari)

The maker of the motion added, “subject to the transfer of the land”.

Discussion continued regarding the recent change in Section 15.4 which provided for all towns to approve school construction projects. The Superintendent reported that the state has recognized the impracticality of that process.

Roll call vote on motion: That the Wachusett Regional District School Committee accept and enter into an Intermunicipal

Agreement between the Town of Rutland and the Wachusett Regional School District, subject to the transfer of the land.

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
David Fedeli  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Jane James  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed:

Carol Esperti  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Julie Scott

(Motion passed 10-3)

III. Discussion of High School Building Committee

Chairman Rokicki sought direction from the membership as to the make-up of the High School Building Committee. The Chairman of the School Committee appoints the building committee, but Chairman Rokicki wanted input from the Committee.

The Superintendent reminded the Committee that the building committee should be a working committee, not a political committee. The building committee members need to be able to make business decisions. The size should be small and manageable. By law, the Committee must have a School Committee member as a voting member. The Superintendent or his designee would also be a member of the committee. The Superintendent informed the Committee that once the project got started, Principal Thomas Pandiscio would be the Superintendent's designee.

In order that the goals and responsibilities of the building committee are defined, the Superintendent inquired of the Committee if they would like him to gather some information on the formation of committees and

charge of the building committee and to provide a proposed recommendation for the next regular School Committee meeting. The Committee concurred.

Chairman Rokicki indicated that the Business/Finance Subcommittee would sift through the information, come up with a process and make a recommendation to the full committee.

The Superintendent reported that the first draft of the architect's contract was received by the District and is being reviewed by the executive staff and District counsel. His initial concern is the inclusion of project management in the contract, where a separate project manager would probably be used.

The process to survey the land has begun, as well as the process for incurring short-term debt.

IV. Executive Session to Discuss an Individual Personnel Matter

Motion: To enter executive session, not to return to public session, to discuss contractual negotiations with non-union personnel.

(C. Esperti)

(D. Benson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

John Rokicki  
Duncan Leith  
Donald Benson  
Carol Esperti  
David Fedeli  
Kimberly Ferguson  
Jeffrey Gibbs  
Jane James  
Natalie Mello  
John Nunnari  
Julie Scott  
Margaret Watson  
Patricia Young

Opposed;  
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

V. Adjournment

Chairman John Rokicki adjourned the meeting at 8:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

ADT:ss

Schoolcommittee/minutes