

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1141 Monday, February 11, 2008

Cafeteria
Davis Hill Elementary School

Committee Members Present:

Margaret Watson, Chair	Mark James
Cynthia Bazinet, Vice-chair	Julianne Kelley
Thomas Ackerman	Duncan Leith
Robert Carter	John Nunnari
Colleen Cipro	Norman Plourde
Shirley Conrad (7:05 PM)	Michael Sherman
Melinda Coyle	Joseph Sova
Steven Hammond	Kathleen Sweeney
Robert Imber	Marcie Zaharee

Committee Members Absent:

Cynthia Ahearn	Judith Newton
----------------	---------------

Administration Present:

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools
Jack Locke, Deputy Superintendent
Darryll McCall, Interim Director of Operations
Susan Sullivan, Director of Human Resources
Peter Brennan, Business Manager
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

Student Representatives Present:

Hillary Blakeney
Sean Lane

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

I. Public Hearing

There were no members of the public wishing to address the School Committee.

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of 1140th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on January 28, 2008

Chair Watson called the Committee's attention to Page 14 of the minutes of the January 28th meeting, suggesting that the following be inserted under H.1 (Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Regional Agreement):

Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee: To accept the final report of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Regional Agreement

This recommendation was acted upon under Agenda item IV.A.1 above.

The minutes, as amended, of the regular School Committee meeting held January 28, 2008 were unanimously approved.

- B. Approval of 280th Special Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on February 2, 2008

The minutes of the special School Committee meeting held February 2, 2008 were approved, with Members Bazinet, Coyle, Imber, Nunnari, Sova and Zaharee abstaining.

III. Treasurer's Report/Financial Statements

Chair Watson reminded the Committee that if there were questions regarding the Business Manager's report that Members should contact the Superintendent; if there were questions regarding the Treasurer's Report, Members should contact the Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair.

IV. Committee Reports

- A. Chair's Opening Remarks

Chair Watson extended congratulations to Member Kelley, who will be recognized on March 1, 2008 by the Federation for Children with Special Needs at the annual conference, "Visions of Community." Member Kelley will receive the Community Partnership Award from the Federation for Children with Special Needs. School Committee members gave Member Kelley a round of applause.

7:05 PM Member Conrad joined the meeting.

Chair Watson thanked those School Committee members who attended the February 2nd Retreat.

Chair Watson informed the Committee of her goal to have 100% participation from School Committee members when conducting the Superintendent's evaluation. Subcommittees have met, or will meet shortly, to address certain

sections of the evaluation. Chair Watson invited new members to contact her if they have questions about the evaluation process.

B. Student Representatives

Sean Lane reported on recent activities at WRHS: the Madrigal Dinner took place the weekend of February 2nd, with the Friday evening performance having to be rescheduled due to weather; twelve hundred (+/-) students attended the Winter Carnival at the DCU Center on February 9th; additional student lockers have recently become available; winter sports teams are doing well.

C. Management Subcommittee (M. Watson, Chair, D. Leith, Vice-chair, C. Ahearn, C. Bazinet, R. Carter, R. Imber, J. Nunnari, M. Sherman, J. Sova)

Chair Watson reported the Management Subcommittee will meet February 13th to address that subcommittee's portion of the Superintendent's evaluation. All members are invited to attend this subcommittee meeting.

D. Education Subcommittee (C. Bazinet, Chair, S. Hammond, Vice-chair, C. Ahearn, J. Kelley, J. Nunnari, N. Plourde, K. Sweeney, M. Zaharee)

Education Subcommittee Chair Bazinet reported on the February 7th meeting of the subcommittee. Superintendent Pandiscio attended the meeting. Subcommittee Chair Bazinet reminded members to return their completed evaluation forms to her for compilation. The next meeting of this subcommittee should be sometime early March.

E. Business/Finance Subcommittee (M. Sherman, Chair, S. Conrad, Vice-chair, T. Ackerman, M. Coyle, M. James, J. Newton, J. Sova)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Sherman reported on the January 30th meeting and announced the next meeting will be February 27th at 7:00 PM. At the February 27th meeting the evaluations of the Superintendent and the Business Manager, as well as review of the 4000 series policies, will be on the agenda.

Motion: The Wachusett Regional School Committee endorses and adopts the following approach toward formulation of the District's budget proposal for FY09. This approach—as discussed at the Committee's budget retreat on Feb. 2, 2008 and detailed in the Superintendent's Report of February 7, 2008—will include these key parameters, priorities, and methods:

- I. That new revenues should total \$4,041,977 and comprise
 - a. Local assessments that the administration believes to be affordable for a majority of Member Towns

- b. \$923,931 in District-derived revenue including, interest earnings, Medicaid reimbursements, and 100 percent of the FY08 appropriation to “Reserve for Extraordinary and Unanticipated Expenses”
- c. No monies from the Excess and Deficiency fund.

II. While acknowledging that the cost to fund all new needs-based requests for the District’s schools would cost \$5.2 million, the Superintendent will use new revenues first to add faculty required to maintain current classroom staffing ratios, and defer the purchase of non-essential instructional supplies and equipment.

III. If necessary, the Superintendent will also defer the hiring of new staff that do not maintain current classroom staffing ratios and, finally, revisit certain expense assumptions.

Superintendent Pandiscio will develop a spending plan accordingly unless and until directed otherwise by a vote of the Committee.

(M. Sherman)

(M. James)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Sherman spoke to this motion and was open to questions, of which there were none.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Collen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Kathleen Sweeney
Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Subcommittee Chair Sherman asked Business/Finance members to hold open March 5th and March 6th as possible dates for a meeting of the Budget Advisory Task Force.

- F. Community Outreach Subcommittee (K. Sweeney, Chair, N. Plourde, Vice-chair, C. Cipro, M. Coyle, J. Newton)

Community Outreach Subcommittee Chair Sweeney reported on the January 31st meeting and announced the subcommittee will meet next on February 28th to address the Superintendent's evaluation.

- G. Audit Advisory Board (Shirley Conrad, Chair, Judith Newton, Vice-chair, School Committee Representatives)

AAB Chair Conrad reported on the February 5th meeting of the Audit Advisory Board, at which all Member Towns except Paxton were represented. Representatives from Powers & Sullivan attended and reported the District books are in good financial order. The next meeting will be scheduled in the late spring.

- H. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

1. Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Regional Agreement (J. Nunnari, Chair, M. Coyle, S. Hammond, R. Imber, N. Plourde)

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Chair Nunnari reported the subcommittee had met immediately before this meeting to approve minutes. Chair Watson read a statement, which was followed by a round of applause, thanking the ad hoc subcommittee members for their efforts and hard work (attachment 2).

2. Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Study Possible Disparity Among the Schools in the Wachusett District (S. Hammond, M. Coyle, R. Imber, M. James, J. Nunnari, K. Sweeney)

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Chair Hammond reported on this subcommittee's initial meeting on February 7th and announced the next meeting will be February 12th.

- I. Building Committees

1. High School

High School Building Committee Chair Leith reported on progress being made at the high school. He acknowledged that an open house should be planned, but when that will be is still undecided. Member Leith informed

the Committee that the Building Committee will now meet one time per month; the next meeting will be February 27th.

J. School Council Reports

Central Tree Middle School (J. Nunnari), Chocksett Middle School (J. Sova), Davis Hill Elementary School (C. Bazinet), Dawson Elementary School (M. James), Glenwood Elementary School (J. Kelley), Houghton Elementary School (N. Plourde), Mayo Elementary School (S. Hammond), Mountview Middle School (M. Sherman), Naquag Elementary School (C. Cipro), Paxton Center School (C. Ahearn), Thomas Prince School (R Imber/K. Sweeney), Wachusett Regional High School (D. Leith), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (M. Zaharee)

Julianne Kelley, - Glenwood Elementary School

Duncan Leith – Wachusett Regional High School

Member Sherman commented that he was impressed with Mountview Middle School's Student Council's attendance at a Holden Selectboard meeting at which the tennis courts at Mountview were discussed.

Chair Watson noted that Holden will be holding a Special Town Meeting on Monday, March 10th; therefore, the next School Committee meeting will be Tuesday, March 11th.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Superintendent Pandiscio informed the School Committee he would be attending the NASSP annual convention in Texas February 21 – 24. The Superintendent explained "Breaking Ranks" to the Committee and a brief discussion ensued.

The full-day kindergarten pilot program being planned for Thomas Prince School was discussed at length. The Superintendent promised to keep the School Committee updated on reaction to and interest in this proposal.

Chair Watson called the Committee's attention to the DRAFT 2008-2009 School Calendar and told the Committee that a vote to approve the calendar will be taken at the February 25th School Committee meeting (attachment 3).

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

Motion: To approve the appropriation of School Building Authority funds in the amount of \$1,077,495 to the Town of Sterling for

reimbursement for the Houghton/Chocksett School, School
Construction Reimbursement.

(N. Plourde)
(J. Sova)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Collen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Kathleen Sweeney
Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

In following up to the discussion of the full-day kindergarten pilot program being planned for Thomas Prince School, the Superintendent asked the School Committee vote to endorse this proposal.

Motion: That the School Committee endorse the Superintendent's proposal to investigate a pilot full day kindergarten program.

(R. Carter)
(K. Sweeney)

Questions raised included: Would students be transported? Princeton students would be transported; students from the other Member Towns would not be transported. What if there is not enough interest/enough students to make up a classroom? If that is the case, a decision on whether or not to proceed would be made in a timely manner. How many students is Administration looking to have in this classroom? Eighteen students would be best, but it could be done with fifteen students. If there are open seats after Princeton residents indicate interest/disinterest in their child(ren) enrolling,

how will those seats be filled? By lottery. If there is more interest than seats available, the regular in-District school choice procedures would be followed.

Member Hammond made friendly amendment that would allow the collection of tuition from the families of those students enrolled in the full day kindergarten classroom. This friendly amendment was accepted by the maker and seconder of the motion.

Motion: That the School Committee endorse the Superintendent's proposal to investigate a pilot full day kindergarten program and allow the Superintendent/Administration to collect tuition to cover related costs.

(R. Carter)

(K. Sweeney)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Collen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Kathleen Sweeney
Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

VI. Public Hearing

No one from the public wished to address the School Committee.

VII. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business brought before the School Committee.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business to come before the Committee.

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(D. Leith)
(M. Sherman)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Collen Cipro
Shirley Conrad
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Julianne Kelley
Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Kathleen Sweeney
Marcie Zaharee

Opposed:

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

TGP:rlp