

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1142 Monday, February 25, 2008

Cafeteria  
Davis Hill Elementary School

*Committee Members Present:*

Margaret Watson, Chair	Mark James
Cynthia Bazinet, Vice-chair	Julianne Kelley
Robert Carter	Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro	Judith Newton
Shirley Conrad	John Nunnari
Melinda Coyle	Norman Plourde
Steven Hammond	Michael Sherman
Robert Imber	Joseph Sova

*Committee Members Absent:*

Thomas Ackerman	Kathleen Sweeney
Cynthia Ahearn	Marcie Zaharee

*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  
Steven Palombo

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

Chair Watson called the regular meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:01 PM.

I. Public Hearing

Chair Watson read the Guidelines for Public Hearing.

Stacey Jackson, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 2).  
Katherine Roberts, Jefferson, addressed the School Committee.  
Daniel Pacek, Jefferson, addressed the School Committee.

Lisa Morgan, Rutland, read a prepared statement (attachment 3).

Chair Watson thanked the members of the public who addressed the School Committee and noted that the matter of bus safety has previously been remanded to the Education Subcommittee for review. Chair Watson will speak with Education Subcommittee Chair Bazinet about this matter.

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of 1141<sup>st</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on February 11, 2008

Motion: To approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held February 11, 2008.

(J. Sova)  
(D. Leith)

The minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held February 11, 2008 were approved, with Member Newton 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 called the Committee's attention to the Revised Agenda for this meeting, explaining the only revision is the order of items requiring action by the School Committee (attachment 4).

Chair Watson reminded the Committee that the next meeting will be held on **Tuesday**, March 11<sup>th</sup>, as the Town of Holden is holding a special Town Meeting on Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Watson asked Members to submit their evaluation forms, for their evaluation of the Superintendent, by March 11, 2008.

B. Student Representatives

The students reported on recent activities at the high school: more students are now assigned individual lockers – members of the senior and junior classes have their own lockers, and half the members of the sophomore and freshman classes have individual lockers; recycling awareness is a growing

interest at the high school; the school was decorated with hearts on Valentines Day; winter sports teams have done well and several will be participating the District playoffs.

Member Bazinet asked the students to comment on remarks, made during the public hearing, with regard to smoking in the girls' bathrooms at the high school. A student commented she thought conditions are better now than they had been just a couple of years ago.

Member Sherman asked the students their impressions of early release days built into the school calendar for staff professional development. The students had positive experiences with these half days.

- 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 called the Committee's attention to attachment 8 of the Superintendent's February 15<sup>th</sup> Report (Superintendent Pandiscio's memorandum to the Management Subcommittee) and encouraged School Committee members to read the memorandum and submit their comments in connection to the evaluation of the Superintendent to her by March 11<sup>th</sup>.

The next meeting of the Management Subcommittee will be Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>.

Member Conrad asked if staff is given the opportunity to evaluate/give feedback about professional development offerings. The Superintendent responded that staff is encouraged to complete and submit evaluation sheets that are available.

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

Chair Bazinet reported there has been no meeting of this subcommittee since the last School Committee meeting. The Education Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Bazinet reminded the School Committee that the matter of bus safety has been a topic addressed by the Education Subcommittee for the last several years. Principals have been surveyed about incidents of bullying on school buses and the responses have been mixed. The use of cameras and/or monitors has been discussed and debated.

Motion: That the Education Subcommittee once again study, on a school by school basis, the issue of bus safety with regard to behavior on buses and traffic patterns on school sites.

(J. Kelley)  
(S. Conrad)

Discussion ensued. Members voiced concerns with the motion, citing the wording of the motion was too specific, that the issue(s) in the motion are management/operations responsibilities, this is not a policy problem, at this point. Chair Watson commented that a parents' first line of action would be to report bus bullying problems to the school principal/assistant principal. The Superintendent assured the Committee that he is looking to solve any of the problems being reported, but is having difficulty getting a grasp on what the problem(s) is/are.

A substitute motion was brought to the table:

Substitute motion: To refer the matter of bus safety to the Education Subcommittee and to the Administration.

(D. Leith)  
(R. Carter)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Joseph Sova

*Opposed:*

None

*Abstained:*

Margaret Watson

*Present:*

Melinda Coyle

(Motion passed 14-0-1-1 present)

A voice vote, to withdraw the original motion, passed, with Members Hammond, Sherman and Watson abstaining.

Education Subcommittee Chair Bazinet called the Committee's attention to attachment 9 of the February 15<sup>th</sup> Superintendent's Report, the Superintendent's report to the Education Subcommittee outlining 2007-2008 education highlights.

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

Business/Finance Chair Sherman reported the Business/Finance Subcommittee will meet on February 27<sup>th</sup>. He asked Business/Finance members to review the 4000 series policies for corrections or issues that need to be addressed. On the agenda for the meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> will be the evaluation of the Superintendent and the evaluation of the Business Manager. Chair Sherman told that the form to evaluate the Business Manager will be emailed to them in advance of the meeting. Chair Sherman updated the Committee on the plans for a meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee with the Budget Advisory Task Force. He wants to be sure there will be sufficient representation from the Member Towns before scheduling the meeting. Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, is being looked at as a possible date of this meeting. Members will be kept posted on the status of scheduling this meeting.

The Superintendent explained borrowing steps for oil remediation.

7:59 PM Member Kelley left the table.

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

In the absence of Community Outreach Subcommittee Chair Sweeney, Vice-chair Plourde reported that the next meeting of the Community Outreach Subcommittee will be February 28<sup>th</sup> and he reported that the start time of the meeting has been changed from 7:00 PM to 7:30 PM. The evaluation of the Superintendent will be on the agenda.

8:03 PM Member Nunnari left the table.

8:03 PM Superintendent Pandiscio left the table.

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

Audit Advisory Board Chair Conrad distributed her memorandum to the School Committee, dated February 25, 2008 (attachment 5). AAB Chair Conrad read the memorandum aloud.

8:05 PM Member Kelley returned to the table.

8:06 PM Superintendent Pandiscio returned to the table.

8:07 PM Member Nunnari returned to the table.

Motion: That the School Committee accept the Annual Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2007, the Independent Auditors' Reports Pursuant to Governmental Auditing Standards and the Single Audit Act Amendment of 1996 for the Year Ending June 30, 2007, and the Management Letter for the Year Ended June 30, 2007, which will include the District's response to the recommendations included therein.

(S. Conrad)

(M. Sherman)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Melinda Coyle  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Joseph Sova

*Opposed:*

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Member Sova asked if there would be another Management Letter, in which the auditors would give opinions on the District's response to recommendations. Such a response is not expected.

The Audit Advisory Board will meet again when the End-of-Year Report is received from the auditors.

H. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

1. 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 the next meeting of this subcommittee will be Monday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

I. Building Committees

1. High School

Member Leith reported the February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Building Committee will be in the Superintendent's Conference Room at the Central Office. He gave an update on progress being made at the high school.

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)

There were no School Council reports.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Member Sherman asked for clarification on particular sections of Attachment B of the Superintendent's Report of February 15<sup>th</sup>. Business Manager Brennan responded to these questions.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

Motion: To approve the School Calendar for School Year 2008-2009

(J. Sova)  
(R. Carter)

Deputy Superintendent spoke to this motion, answering questions about the proposed calendar.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Robert Carter  
Collen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Melinda Coyle  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Judith Newton  
John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Joseph Sova

*Opposed:*

Cynthia Bazinet

*Abstained:*

Margaret Watson

(The motion passed 14-1-1)

Motion: To authorize the Treasurer to borrow \$2,661,465 in the form of a Revenue Anticipation Note (RAN) to be repaid by proceeds from the Massachusetts School Building Authority

(D. Leith)

(J. Nunnari)

Member Newton recused herself and left the table.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
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

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To authorize the Treasurer to borrow from time to time, such sums of money as may be necessary, not to exceed an aggregate amount of \$2,000,000 for the purpose of paying the costs for environmental remediation and cleanup of the oil contamination of Jefferson School Building, including ongoing operating, assessment and remediation efforts as required by the Department of Environmental Protection or otherwise, and may issue Bonds or Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN's). Each authorized issue shall be payable within 15 years of its date of issue.

(M. Sherman)  
(S. Conrad)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
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

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To seek Member Town approval of the borrowing of \$2,000,000 by the Wachusett Regional School District for the purpose of paying the costs for environmental remediation and cleanup of the oil contamination of Jefferson School Building, including ongoing operating, assessment and remediation efforts as required by the Department of Environmental protection or otherwise, and incurring debt by the issuance

of bonds or notes under Chapter 214 of the Acts of 2007 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, and to authorize the Superintendent to enter into and execute all contracts necessary or otherwise material to such work and to act or do anything relative thereto.

(S. Conrad)  
(J. Sova)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
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

*Opposed:*

None

(The motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To authorize the Treasurer to borrow an amount not to exceed \$750,000 in the form of a Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) to be repaid by proceeds from another BAN within a 12 month period.

(J. Nunnari)  
(S. Conrad)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
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

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed unanimously)

8:38 PM Member Newton returned to the table.

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.

(R. Carter)  
(M. Coyle)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Collen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Melinda Coyle  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Mark James  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Judith Newton

John Nunnari  
Norman Plourde  
Michael Sherman  
Joseph Sova

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

TGP:rlp