

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1125, Tuesday, March 13, 2007

Cafeteria
Davis Hill Elementary School

Committee Members Present:

Margaret Watson, Chair	Judith Newton
Cynthia Bazinet	John Nunnari
Robert Carter	Norman Plourde
Melinda Coyle	Joseph Sova
Steven Hammond	Kathleen Sweeney
Robert Imber	Tammy Tod (8:50 PM)
Mark James	

Committee Members Absent:

Thomas Ackerman	Kelly Maxwell
Cynthia Ahearn	Edward Pescaro
Shirley Conrad	Michael Sherman
David Gibbs	

Administration Present:

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools
Jack Locke, Director of Operations
Peter Brennan, Business Manager
Susan Sullivan, Director of Human Resources

Student Representatives Present:

Nathaniel Flynn

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 7:09 PM.

I. Public Hearing

Chair Watson introduced Representative Lewis Evangelidis and explained to the Committee that she would ask Representative Evangelidis to address the Committee and that she would allow questions from Committee members.

Representative Evangelidis briefly explained the State budget process, noting that the Governor's Budget is known as House 1 and was recently released. Usually House 1 is released in January; however, when a new governor is elected, the governor is granted an additional month to prepare his budget. House 1 contains a budget of \$26.7 billion and represents approximately 4% of an increase. House 1 also included an additional \$200 million in additional Chapter 70 funding, of which the Wachusett District benefited and received approximately 22% more Chapter 70 than in FY07. Representative Evangelidis informed the Committee that the increase to the District was as a result of the inequity of the previous formula.

Representative Evangelidis represented to the Committee that he believed that the State budget would be finalized by the end of June 2007. He cautioned the Committee that other school districts are angry because of the small increases in Chapter 70 that some received. He reported that some shifting could take place but the District's Chapter 70 aid has been verified by several State sources, including the Department of Education.

Representative Evangelidis then entertained questions from Committee members. Chair Watson then thanked Representative Evangelidis for coming to address the Committee.

Chair Watson then recognized any member of the public who had signed in to address the Committee.

Paul Challenger, Holden Finance Committee Chair, addressed the Committee and stated that due to the increase in State aid to Holden and the amount of Minimum Local Contribution for Holden, Holden is prepared to contribute funding to allow the District's budget to increase by 9.9%. He reminded the Committee that although he recognizes the needs of the District to add programs like the Literacy Initiative, that Holden has needs to address as well. He expressed hope that the District continue to work with the Town of Holden to come to agreement on the funding for the District. Mr. Challenger announced that on Tuesday, March 20, 2007, the Holden School Committee Members would be meeting with the Holden Finance Committee at 7:00

PM at the Holden Municipal Light Department Building. In addition, on Tuesday, March 27, 2007, Superintendent Pandiscio would be meeting with the Holden Finance Committee at 7:00 PM at the Holden Municipal Light Department Building.

Joseph Becker, Rutland Finance Committee Chair, reported that Rutland had reviewed the budget numbers presented at the Budget Advisory Task Force meeting and that Rutland could support an increase of \$288,000, which represents a 5% increase. This would result in an overall impact to the District of the need to reduce the District's budget by \$1.3 million.

Richard Fenton, Paxton Finance Committee Chair, reported that Paxton was still in the early stages of budget discussions. The Paxton Finance Committee did review the District's budget numbers presented at the Budget Advisory Task Force meeting and that Paxton would not be able to support those numbers. He reported that while the District is expanding, Paxton is contracting.

Joseph Sullivan, Holden Selectman, offered accolades to Representative Evangelidis and Senator Chandler for all of the work to revise the Chapter 70 formula and that he was glad that the District was benefiting from the change in formula. Selectman Sullivan reported that there is limited additional revenue each year, including 2.5% increase per law, new growth, and additional State aid. He recognized the need to educate the children but asked that the Committee also recognize the municipal needs like public safety. Selectman Sullivan also requested that the School Committee or Superintendent present something to the taxpayers explaining the reasons why the high school project has increased from the \$70.5 million project brought before the Member Town meetings.

II. Secretary's Report

Motion: To amend the agenda of this meeting to add an executive session after new business, for the purpose of approval of minutes and pending litigation, not to return to public session

(R. Imber)
(M. James)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Kathleen Sweeney
Cynthia Bazinet

Robert Carter
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Judith Newton
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Joseph Sova

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

- A. Approval of 1124th Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on February 26, 2007.

Motion: To approve the 1124th Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on February 26, 2007, with the following changes: on page 4, under Section C, “vision plan” should be changed to “mission statement”; on page 6, under School Council Reports, there were no reports given at the meeting; on page 6, under Public Hearing, “reported” should be changed to “presented information”.

(J. Sova)
(M. Coyle)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Joseph Sova

Opposed:
None

Abstained:

Judith Newton
Kathleen Sweeney

(Motion passed 10-0-2)

- B. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on February 26, 2007 - *Copies of minutes to be distributed at March 13, 2007 School Committee meeting*

This was deferred to the Executive Session at the end of the meeting.

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 reminded Committee Members that the Annual Budget Hearing is scheduled for Monday, March 26, 2007, and that two-thirds of the sitting membership, or fourteen members, must vote in the affirmative in order for a budget to be adopted.

Chair Watson announced the following meetings:

- Tuesday, March 20, 2007, the Holden School Committee Members would be meeting with the Holden Finance Committee at 7:00 PM at the Holden Municipal Light Department Building.
- Tuesday, March 27, 2007, Superintendent Pandiscio would be meeting with the Holden Finance Committee at 7:00 PM at the Holden Municipal Light Department Building.
- Wednesday, April 25, 2007, Stand for Children has scheduled a rally at the Statehouse in Boston. Chair Watson reported that Holden would be having busses but the people from other Member Towns were welcome to ride the busses as well.

B. Student Advisory Committee (Nathaniel Flynn, Alexandra O'Connor)

Student Representative Alexandra O'Connor was not present.

Student Representative Nathaniel Flynn asked when the auto shop would be ready for students. Chair Watson reported that the floor was being laid and that students would be able to use the shop by the end of March. The auto lift would be installed at a later date.

Student Representative Nathaniel Flynn also asked about the accident at the high school involving a construction worker. Chair Watson reported that an accident had occurred and that the construction worker was recovering at home.

Member Judith Newton left the meeting at 8:00 PM.

C. Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Chair Watson reported the Strategic Plan Steering Committee met on March 8, 2007 and has completed the mission statement. The group is now working on core values. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 22, 2007, at the Curriculum Center at the District Central Office at 7:00 PM.

Following inquiry, Chair Watson explained the process that the group is following. She expected that the plan would not be completed before the end of this fiscal year and that a decision had not been made to date as whether the plan would be a three year plan or a five year plan.

D. Management Subcommittee (M. Watson, Chair, T. Ackerman, Vice-chair, C. Ahearn, C. Bazinet, R. Carter, S. Conrad, R. Imber, M. Sherman)

Chair Watson reported that the Management Subcommittee met on February 27, 2007 to conduct its portion of the Evaluation of the Superintendent. She requested that members submit the appropriate portions of the evaluations to her by Monday, March 26, 2007. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 4, 2007, to review the narrative for the Superintendent's evaluation and to begin the review of policies.

- E. Education Subcommittee (C. Bazinet, Chair, Steven Hammond, Vice-chair, C. Ahearn, J. Nunnari, N. Plourde, K. Sweeney)

Subcommittee Chair Bazinet reported that the next meeting of the Education Subcommittee will be March 21, 2007 for the purpose of evaluating the Superintendent. The meeting is scheduled for 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center. Chair Bazinet reported that the Education Subcommittee completed its review of the 3000 series of policies and the Subcommittee was recommending changes to the following policies, none of which were substantive. Chair Bazinet reviewed each of the policies.

1. Amended Policy AP3130 **Policy Relating to Education Time on Learning** – first reading
2. Amended Policy AP3311 **Policy Relating to Education Subject Fields and Courses for High School Students** - first reading
3. Amended Policy AP3311.1 **Policy Relating to Education Graduation Requirements** – first reading
4. Amended Policy AP3313 **Policy Relating to Education Controversial Issues** - first reading

Motion: To amend the recommendation to change the word “all” in #4 on page A to “alternative”

(R. Imber)

(R. Carter)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Kathleen Sweeney
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Joseph Sova

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

5. Amended Policy AP3313.1 **Policy Relating to Education**
Parent Notification of Human Sexuality Issues – first reading
6. Amended Policy AP3314 **Policy Relating to Education**
Ethics Policy - first reading
7. Amended Policy AP3350 **Policy Relating to Education**
Experimental and Innovative Programs – first reading
8. Amended Policy AP3450 **Policy Relating to Education** **Non-Discrimination of Educational Materials** - first reading

Motion: To approve the first reading of Amended Policy AP3130 **Policy Relating to Education** **Time on Learning**, Amended Policy AP3311 **Policy Relating to Education** **Subject Fields and Courses for High School Students**, Amended Policy AP3311.1 **Policy Relating to Education** **Graduation Requirements**, Amended Policy AP3313.1 **Policy Relating to Education** **Parent Notification of Human Sexuality Issues**, Amended Policy AP3314 **Policy Relating to Education** **Ethics Policy**, Amended Policy AP3350 **Policy Relating to Education** **Experimental and Innovative Programs**, Amended Policy AP3450 **Policy Relating to Education** **Non-Discrimination of Educational Materials**, and Amended Policy AP3313 **Policy Relating to Education** **Controversial Issues** (as amended above)

(M. Coyle)

(J. Sova)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Kathleen Sweeney
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde

Joseph Sova

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

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

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-chair of the Business/Finance Subcommittee, Chair Watson reported that the next meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee is scheduled for Monday, March 19, 2007, at 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the District Central Office for the purpose of conducting the Superintendent's evaluation.

Chair Watson reported that the Budget Advisory Task Force met with members of the Member Town Finance/Advisory Committees and that the meeting was very cordial.

Student Representative Flynn left the meeting at 8:30 PM.

- G. Community Outreach Subcommittee (K. Sweeney, Chair, E. Pescaro, Vice-chair, M. Coyle, J. Newton, N. Plourde))

Subcommittee Chair Sweeney reported that the Community Outreach Subcommittee met on Wednesday, March 7, 2007. At the beginning of the meeting three representatives from the Worcester School Committee joined the subcommittee for discussions of ways in which students from Wachusett and Worcester could participate in activities together in order to better understand the different communities. Activities suggested were: music concert, athletic competition, community service, and video production. Chair Sweeney reported that the Worcester School Committee would be presenting the following motion for action and recommended that the School Committee act similarly:

Motion: To request that the Administration interact with appropriate officials of the Worcester School District to implement cooperative activities for the students of Wachusett and of the Worcester Public Schools. These activities may include, but need not be limited to, (1) a concert of the musical

ensembles of the secondary schools, (2) a sports competition involving combined teams, (3) meetings of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council with the Wachusett Student Council, (4) a film project involving students of both school systems with a focus on a diversity-based theme, (5) participation of the students and parents of both school districts in the April 25 "Stand for Children" rally at the State House, with an educational component based on a lesson in the governmental process, (6) cooperative programs of the South High Community School Academy of Education, Service and Government and the Mountaineer Volunteers, and (7) an initiative involving the Best Buddies Program of Wachusett and the students of the Worcester Technical High School.

(K. Sweeney)

(R. Carter)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Kathleen Sweeney
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Joseph Sova

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Subcommittee Chair Sweeney reported that the next meeting of the Community Outreach Subcommittee is scheduled for Thursday, April 12, 2007, at 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center at the District Central Office.

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

In the absence of Audit Advisory Board Chair Conrad, Chair Watson reported that the Board had not met since the last School Committee meeting.

I. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

J. Building Committees

1. High School – Kelly Maxwell

In Member Maxwell's absence, there was no report given.

2. Rutland – Elementary School – Edward Pescaro

In Member Pescaros absence, there was no report given.

K. School Council Reports: Central Tree Middle School (T. Ackerman), Chocksett Middle School (S. Conrad), Davis Hill Elementary School (C. Bazinet), Dawson Elementary School (M. James), Glenwood Elementary School (E. Pescaro), Houghton Elementary School (N. Plourde), Mayo Elementary School (S. Hammond), Mountview Middle School (J. Newton), Naquag Elementary School (J. Nunnari), Paxton Center School (M. Coyle), Thomas Prince School (K. Sweeney), Wachusett Regional High School (M. Sherman/T. Tod), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (T. Tod/C. Ahearn)

School Council liaisons from Dawson and Naquag reported on recently attended meetings.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Member Carter commented that the article entitled Reading Rituals was excellent and he commended the Superintendent for implementing a literacy program similar to the one described in the article. Member Carter also asked for clarification on the different percentage budget increases mentioned during the public hearing portion of the meeting. The Superintendent explained the difference between budget and assessment.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

1. Approval to Extend the Contract, dated July 1, 2003, Between URS Corporation and the Wachusett Regional School District for the period January 1, 2007 to August 31, 2007, for the provision of professional services in connection with the high school addition and renovation project.

Motion: To approve the extension to the Contract, dated July 1, 2003, Between URS Corporation and the Wachusett Regional School District for the period January 1, 2007 to August 31, 2007, for the provision of professional services in connection with the high school addition and renovation project.

(J. Nunnari)

(K. Sweeney)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Kathleen Sweeney
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Joseph Sova

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

VI. Public Hearing

No one from the public wished to address the Committee.

VII. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business brought before the Committee.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business brought before the Committee.

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To enter executive session for the purpose of approving Executive Session Minutes and for discussing pending litigation, not to return to public session.

(J. Sova)
(K. Sweeney)

Member Tod joined the meeting at 8:50 PM.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Kathleen Sweeney
Cynthia Bazinet
Robert Carter
Melinda Coyle
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Joseph Sova

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Tammy Tod

(Motion passed 11-0-1)

The Committee left public session at 8:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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