

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1146 Monday, April 28, 2008

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

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

*Committee Members Absent:*

Cynthia Ahearn	Marcie Zaharee
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*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 7:03 PM. She thanked the student representatives for leading interested members on a tour of the high school from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

I. Public Hearing

Chair Watson read Guidelines to the Public Hearing.

Denise Forsberg-DiMarzio, Holden, read a prepared statement (attachment 2).

Following Ms. Forsberg-DiMarzio's address, Chair Watson welcomed the members of the baseball team who were in the audience.

## II. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of 1145<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on April 14, 2008

Chair Watson noted that on page 6 the words "at least" should be inserted before "14 votes in favor will be needed...."

Motion: To approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held April 14, 2008, as corrected.

(M. Coyle)  
(S. Hammond)

The minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held April 14, 2008 were approved by consensus, with Members Ackerman, Bazinet, Conrad and Sova abstaining.

- C. Approval of minutes of the executive session held on April 14, 2008

Chair Watson asked members to review the minutes and if no corrections of substance were noted, these minutes could be approved in public session. If substantive corrections are noted, the minutes would be approved in executive session.

Member Kelley has a correction of substance to offer; therefore, approval of these minutes will be done in executive session.

## 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 informed the Committee of a special meeting of the School Committee being called for Tuesday, May 6, 2008, 7:00 PM in the cafeteria of Davis Hill Elementary School. Chair Watson

reminded the Committee that since this will be a special meeting of the School Committee, there will be no public hearings.

Chair Watson informed the Committee of the organizational meeting, following conclusion of all town elections, scheduled for Thursday, May 22, 2008. She also reminded members that newly elected School Committee members should be sworn in before the organizational meeting.

Following Chair Watson's announcement of the Thursday evening organizational and regular School Committee meetings, several members reported they would not be available on that date.

Motion: To re-schedule the organizational meeting and the regular School Committee meeting from May 22, 2008 to May 27, 2008.

(S. Conrad)

(M. James)

Vote:

In favor:

Cynthia Bazinet  
Thomas Ackerman  
Robert Carter  
Colleen 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

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Margaret Watson  
Judith Newton

(Motion passed 16-0-2)

Chair Watson thanked outgoing members Cynthia Ahearn, Judith Newton and Kathleen Sweeney. She also expressed her appreciation

to Student Representatives Hillary Blakeney, Sean Lane and Stephen Palombo, citing their exemplary representation of the students in this district and told of the pleasure they were to work with, and wished the students the best in the year ahead.

B. Student Representatives (Hillary Blakeney, Sean Lane, Stephen Palombo)

Student Representative Stephen Palombo commented that since the last School Committee meeting there have only been four days of classes. He made mention of the incident that took place on Sunnyside Avenue. Sean Lane reported on activities in the days following that incident. Hillary Blakeney commented that spring recess “came at a good time.” An assembly for seniors was held on April 28<sup>th</sup>. A member asked for a report on the assembly, which Sean Lane gave.

High school graduation will be held Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, at the DCU Center in Worcester.

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 asked Management Subcommittee Member Nunnari to address the School Committee. Member Nunnari called the Committee’s attention to attachment #9 of the April 24, 2008 Superintendent’s Report, a proposed revision to School Committee By-Laws.

Motion: To approve the amending of Article II Section 3 of the School Committee By-Laws as follows: “...The offices of Chair and Vice-Chair shall be for a term of one year, and they may not succeed themselves more than **three additional times.**”

(J. Nunnari)

(D. Leith)

The motion was discussed.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Cynthia Bazinet  
Thomas Ackerman  
Robert Carter  
Colleen 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

Opposed:  
Judith Newton

Abstained:  
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 16-1-1)

- 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 the subcommittee has completed all tasks for this year.

- 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 the subcommittee has not met since the last School Committee meeting. He did report on his attendance, along with Chair Watson and Superintendent Pandiscio, at the April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Regional Selectboard at which meeting the proposed assessment reduction was discussed. Subcommittee Chair Sherman informed the School Committee that the towns of Holden and Princeton have officially notified the District of their support of the assessment reduction; nothing official has been received from the towns of Rutland or Sterling; and it has been learned, unofficially, that Paxton will not support the proposed assessment reduction.

Business/Finance members were reminded that this subcommittee does not disband upon May town elections. This subcommittee stands until the next Business/Finance Subcommittee is appointed by the next Chair.

Chair Watson turned to the Superintendent seeking direction on the budget, especially in advance of the first annual Town Meeting, which will be in Paxton on Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. Discussion ensued. Member Carter asked the Superintendent what would be lost by going forward with a \$1.3 million reduction. Superintendent Pandiscio reported the

hiring of staff (teachers at the high school (3), Paxton Center School (1), literacy coaches (2), ELL coordinator (1)) would be eliminated. It was agreed that the \$1 million assessment reduction proposal was a fair offer. Discussion continued.

Motion: To reduce the assessments to Member Towns by \$1 million.

(K. Sweeney)  
(R. Imber)

Member Sherman offered a friendly amendment to include a reference to the *FY09 Proposed Assessments 4/14/08* document that was presented by Superintendent Pandiscio at the April 14, 2008 School Committee meeting (attachment 3). Both the maker and the seconder of the motion accepted this friendly amendment.

Discussion continued.

Motion: To reduce the assessments to Member Towns by \$1 million, as outlined at the April 14, 2008 School Committee meeting, referencing the document *FY09 Proposed Assessments 4/14/08*.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Thomas Ackerman  
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  
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Melinda Coyle

(Motion passed 15-3)

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Sherman thanked the subcommittee for the time and attention given this matter.

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

This subcommittee has not met since the last School Committee meeting.

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

Audit Advisory Board Chair Conrad reminded members meetings of the AAB may be scheduled during the summer months.

- I. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

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

- J. Building Committee

- 1. High School

High School Building Committee Chair Leith thanked the students for conducting the tour for School Committee members. Chair Leith gave a report on progress being made at the high school, which is moving slower than he would like. Work continues on the outside of the building and the athletic fields. Chair Leith informed the School Committee that landscape architects Huntress Associates have made some recommendations about the track areas and he also reported that Huntress Associates will not accept the baseball infield the way it currently stands. Chair Leith reported that remedial work done on the infield was not successful so additional repairs have to be done. Superintendent Pandiscio reported a letter has been sent to the contractor letting the contractor know the District wants the infield completed within 7 days. The Superintendent is of the opinion the work required to get the infield redone should not be a lengthy project, but weather is a factor and the forecast for the upcoming week is not favorable. Member Carter asked if Ms. Forsberg-DiMarzio's request for a time frame could be addressed. The Superintendent said a three week time frame could be a possibility, but such cannot be pinpointed at this time. The Superintendent also reiterated that the baseball field is unsafe in its present condition.

Chair Leith was asked the status of the tennis courts; they are awaiting the results of the compaction test.

Chair Leith promised the School Committee members he would keep them posted on progress being made on all athletic areas.

The next meeting of the High School Building Committee is April 30<sup>th</sup>, at which time Chair Leith expects to have a better idea of progress being made. A public session will be the first item on the agenda for the April 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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)

Member Kelley reported on a recent Glenwood Elementary School School Council meeting. She also commented that she has enjoyed working with Principal Nosel.

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Superintendent Pandiscio called the Committee's attention to attachment 12 of his April 24<sup>th</sup> Report to the School Committee – field trip checklist. He told the Committee that Natalie Mello of WPI has reviewed the checklist and made suggestions, which have been incorporated. Protocols will be developed over the summer and training will be planned. Superintendent Pandiscio told the Committee that current policies are adequate, but better documentation of adherence to policies needs to be implemented. The Superintendent expressed his appreciation to Deputy Superintendent Locke and Ms. Mello for their attention to this matter.

Member Conrad asked the status of grade 5 re-configuration in Sterling. The Superintendent reported this will be discussed at the April 29<sup>th</sup> administrative Staff meeting.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

1. Approval of the Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools

Chair Watson called the Committee's attention to attachment #4 of the April 24<sup>th</sup> Superintendent's Report to the School Committee – Evaluation of the Superintendent 2007 – 2008 (attachment 4).

Motion: To accept approval of the Evaluation of the Superintendent 2007 – 2008 as submitted by School Committee Chair Watson and chairs of the subcommittees.

(D. Leith)  
(M. Sherman)

Member Cipro suggested in the future a common format be used by all subcommittees to make reading of the evaluation materials easier.

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Thomas Ackerman  
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  
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To renew the contract of Superintendent of Schools Thomas G. Pandiscio, according to Article 1-1 of the *Employment Contract Between the Wachusett Regional School District and Dr. Thomas Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools*, based upon a positive job performance evaluation by May 1, 2008.

(D. Leith)  
(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Thomas Ackerman  
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  
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

VII. Public Hearing

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

VIII. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business brought before the School Committee.

IX. New Business

There was no new business brought before the School Committee.

X. Executive Session

Motion: To adjourn to executive session to correct and approve minutes of the April 14, 2008 executive session, not to return to public session.

(S. Hammond)  
(M. Sherman)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Thomas Ackerman  
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  
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

XI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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