

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1139 Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Cafeteria

Davis Hill Elementary School

Committee Members Present:

Margaret Watson, Chair	Duncan Leith
Cynthia Bazinet, Vice-chair	Judith Newton
Thomas Ackerman	John Nunnari
Robert Carter	Norman Plourde
Colleen Cipro	Michael Sherman
Steven Hammond	Joseph Sova
Robert Imber	Kathleen Sweeney
Mark James	

Committee Members Absent:

Cynthia Ahearn	Julianne Kelley
Shirley Conrad	Marcie Zaharee
Melinda Coyle	

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

Student Representatives Present:

Hillary Blakeney

Chair Watson called the regular meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:03 PM.

I. Public Hearing

No one from the public had signed up to speak.

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of 1138th Regular Meeting Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on December 10, 2007

The minutes of the regular meeting held December 10, 2007 were approved, by consensus, with Members Newton, Sherman, and Sova abstaining.

B. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the WRSD Committee held on December 10, 2007

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.

Motion: To approve the executive session minutes of the WRSD Committee held on December 10, 2007, to be released.

(T. Ackerman)

(J. Nunnari)

The roll call vote started but was abandoned as there was a question regarding the clarity of the minutes. Chair Watson indicated that the minutes would be reviewed in executive session and approved and released there.

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 Members that the Annual School Committee Retreat would be Saturday, February 2, 2008 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon, in the Media Center at the high school.

Chair Watson reported that Holden has scheduled a Special Town Meeting for Monday, March 10, 2008, so the School Committee meeting on that date will have to be re-scheduled.

Chair Watson informed the Committee that there would be a report on the Literacy Initiative and turned over the meeting to the Superintendent.

Superintendent Thomas Pandiscio introduced Kelley Gangi, Curriculum Supervisor – English/Language Arts, who gave an update on the District's Literacy Initiative. She shared information via a PowerPoint presentation (attachment 1) and introduced the four Literacy Coaches, Rachel Kodra, Special Education and kindergarten, Charlene Griffin, grade 2, Deborah LaBombard, grade 1, and Catherine Schofield, grade 3.

Following the presentation there was a brief discussion where Members asked questions, including how the students are assessed, considering how much time each day is devoted to literacy, how do the other subjects get proper attention, and whether or not more staff would be needed for FY09. Ms. Gangi answered that there were several methods of assessment in place, including DIBELS and DRA. She explained that the timing has been a challenge for the teachers but that there is clearly a commitment to this new initiative on the part of the teaching staff in the District. Ms. Gangi indicated that she would like to see an additional two Literacy Coaches for the next year as the program will be expanding to the middle school level.

B. Student Representatives

Hillary Blakeney reported that the hallways were now all open and the students were appreciative of that. She reported on the various sports activities at the high school, that the Madrigal Dinner would be coming up, and that mid-terms begin Tuesday, January 22, 2008.

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

1. Amended Policy - AP1111 Policy Relating to School Committee Operations School Committee Member Responsibility – second reading

Motion: To approve the second reading of Amended Policy AP1111 *Policy Relating to School Committee Operations* *School Committee Member Responsibility*, waiving the reading.

(R. Carter)
(J. Sova)

Motion: To amend the policy to change the added language to the following: “regularly attend School Committee meetings and recognize one’s duty to express an opinion by a vote, abstaining only when there is a direct personal interest”

(N. Plourde)
(M. Sherman)

There was lengthy discussion as to the reasons for abstaining from voting. Members Plourde and Sherman accepted as a friendly amendment to add “or lack of knowledge.” to the amended language.

Motion: To amend the policy to change the added language to the following: “regularly attend School Committee meetings and recognize one’s duty to express an opinion by a vote, abstaining only when there is a direct personal interest or lack of knowledge.”

(N. Plourde)

(M. Sherman)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Robert Carter
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman

Opposed:

Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Judith Newton
John Nunnari
Joseph Sova
Kathleen Sweeney

Abstained:

Margaret Watson

(Motion failed 3-11-1)

Motion: To amend the policy by removing the words “aye or nay”

(J. Sova)

(R. Imber)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Judith Newton
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Roll call vote on the main motion, as amended:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Cynthia Bazinet
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Judith Newton
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously).

2. Amended Policy - AP1160 **Policy Relating to School Committee Operations School Committee Member Ethics** – second reading

Motion: To amend the policy by removing the words “aye or nay”

(D. Leith)

(J. Sova)

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion: To approve the second reading of Amended Policy AP1160 **Policy Relating to School Committee Operations School Committee Member Ethics**, as amended, waiving the reading.

(D. Leith)

(J. Nunnari)

Motion passed unanimously.

- 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 that the January meeting had been canceled as there was no business before the Subcommittee. A meeting will be scheduled and the Subcommittee will begin the review for the Superintendent's evaluation.

- 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 that the Business/Finance Subcommittee had met. At the meeting the Subcommittee discussed the concerns that had been brought forward at the public hearings for the Regional Agreement changes. The Subcommittee reviewed the cover letter which will be sent to the Member Town Selectboards and Finance/Advisory Committees with the Glossary of Terms and the timeline for the development of the District's budget.

The Superintendent spoke to the subcommittee regarding the amendments to the Leases with the Member Towns and recommended that nothing be done until after the Annual Town Meetings so that there is no confusion with the suggested amendments to the Regional Agreement.

Subcommittee Chair Sherman reported that the Superintendent had updated the subcommittee regarding the use of vans for special education transportation. The same information was included in the Superintendent's Report.

Business Manager Peter Brennan advised the subcommittee of the borrowing timeline for the oil remediation. It was decided not to take on the debt until later in the year.

The next meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee will be Wednesday, January 30, 2008 at 6:30 PM and will serve as the "rehearsal" for the retreat.

1. Amended Policy – AP7110 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Facility Use** – second reading
2. Amended Policy – AP7114 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Use of School Facilities for Telecommunications Equipment** – second reading
3. Amended Policy – AP7124 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Facilities Security** – second reading

4. Amended Policy – AP7141 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Inventory Control** – second reading
5. Amended Policy – AP7142 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Energy Efficient Equipment** – second reading
6. Amended Policy – AP7153 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Prohibition of Recreational Vehicular Use** – second reading
7. Amended Policy – AP7159 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Vandalism** – second reading
8. Amended Policy – AP7161 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Naming of School Property** – second reading
9. Amended Policy – AP7324 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Use of Elevators** – second reading
10. Amended Policy – AP4242 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Early Childhood Program** – second reading

Motion: To approve the second reading of Amended Policies AP7110 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Facility Use**, AP7114 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Use of School Facilities for Telecommunications Equipment**, AP7124 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Facilities Security**, AP7141 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Inventory Control**, AP7142 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Energy Efficient Equipment**, AP7153 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Prohibition of Recreational Vehicular Use**, AP7159 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Vandalism**, AP7161 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Naming of School Property**, AP7324 **Policy Relating to Support Operations Use of Elevators**, and AP4242 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Early Childhood Program**, waiving the readings.

(M. Sherman)

(J. Nunnari)

(Motion passed unanimously.)

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

Community Outreach Subcommittee Chair Sweeney reported that the last meeting could not be convened due to a lack of quorum. The next meeting will be posted for Thursday, January 31, 2008, at 7:00 PM in the Curriculum Center. Subcommittee Chair Sweeney reported that she distributed the agenda and attachments to all members so that the attachments would not have to be copied a second time.

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

Audit Advisory Board Vice-chair Judith Newton reported that there was no further activity since the last School Committee meeting.

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 walked through the process that the Subcommittee followed in order to present the recommendations that are before the Committee. He explained, article by article, the changes that were being recommended, noting that the majority of changes involved consistency of language and were not substantial changes.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Chair Nunnari advised that there will be a public hearing at the next School Committee meeting on January 28, 2008. Copies of the recommendations will be forwarded to the Member Town Selectboards and Finance/Advisory Committees, as well as to the Member Town libraries. An invitation to the Public Hearing will be included in the correspondence. In addition, the recommendations will be posted on the District's website.

Member Norman Plourde read a prepared statement (attachment 2).

I. Building Committees

1. High School

WRHSBC Chair Leith reported that the project is winding down. There are discussions as to whether or not the District should take over some of the remaining projects, like the tennis courts. It would be dependent on what the credit from the general contractor would be. The punchlist items are being addressed but in a random fashion rather than addressing all of the issues in one area and then moving on. In March the Building Committee will have been together for five years.

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 Steven Hammond reported that Mayo Elementary School Council met on January 15, 2008 and discussed the budget and holiday concerns.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

The Superintendent made note that the special education van issue has been put to rest. The District's transportation providers do not use twelve-passenger vans to transport students.

The Superintendent was asked why the buses do not have the full bar in front of the busses when the busses are stopped. Business Manager Brennan will check with McCarthy on this issue.

Member Cynthia Bazinet left the meeting at 9:15 PM.

Member Robert Carter noted that there were some interesting school events included in Interim Director Darryll McCall's report. He indicated that the District needs to be pro-active in providing positive information to the media.

Motion: To ask the Superintendent to develop public information program to publicize good things, to assign a responsible party, and to report back by the second meeting in March.

(R. Carter)

(J. Newton)

Discussion continued.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Judith Newton
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
None

Abstained:
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 13-0-1)

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

Chair Margaret Watson reported that the Management Subcommittee had made recommendations to amend the School Committee By-laws. The appropriate fourteen day notice was given. She informed the members that at least eleven (11) “aye” votes would be needed for passage.

Motion: To change article designation numbers in the School Committee Bylaws to Roman Numerals

(M. James)
(J. Nunnari)

Motion passed 13-0-1, with Chair Watson abstaining.

Motion: Article II Section 1 – to strike the language “General Laws, Tercentary Edition of Massachusetts” and insert the wording “The Massachusetts General Laws”

(D. Leith)
(M. James)

Motion passed 13-0-1, with Chair Watson abstaining.

Motion: Article II Section 3 – to require two years of prior service on the School Committee to qualify for the office of Vice-Chair

(D. Leith)
(J. Nunnari)

Roll call vote:

In favor:
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Judith Newton
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde

Joseph Sova
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
Michael Sherman

Abstained:
Margaret Watson

(Motion passed 12-1-1)

Motion: Article II Section 5 – to accept the recommendation of the Management Subcommittee regarding the voting requirement of the School Committee Chair

(D. Leith)
(M. James)

Motion passed 13-0-1, with Chair Watson abstaining.

Motion: Article III Section 1 – to strike the fifth paragraph reading, “If a regularly scheduled School Committee meeting is scheduled on the day of a town election, the School Committee meeting will take place on the following day.”

(T. Ackerman)
(D. Leith)

Motion passed 13-0-1, with Chair Watson abstaining.

Motion: Article III Section 3 – to strike the word “present” and insert the word “voting”

(M. James)
(D. Leith)

Motion passed 13-0-1, with Chair Watson abstaining.

Motion: Article III Section 4 – to strike the word “will” in the sentence, “The first public hearing will be limited to twenty minutes” and insert the word “may”

(D. Leith)
(T. Ackerman)

Motion passed 13-0-1, with Chair Watson abstaining.

Motion: Article III Section 5 – to strike the entire paragraph under Article III Section 5 and refer the subject of reimbursement/expenses for School Committee members to the Management Subcommittee for the purpose of developing policy on this matter.

(J. Sova)
(D. Leith)

Motion passed 13-0-1, with Chair Watson abstaining.

Motion: Article IV Section 2 and Article V Section 6 – to substitute non-gender biased language to these sections by adding “his/her Designee” in Section 2 and “his/her” in Section 6.

(M. Sherman)
(M. James)

Motion passed 13-0-1, with Chair Watson abstaining.

Motion: Article V Section 6 – to eliminate the provision “no firm shall be used for more than five consecutive years.”

(M. Sherman)
(J. Nunnari)

Motion passed 13-0-1, with Chair Watson abstaining.

Motion: To transfer indirect funds from grants to the Professional Development account as recommended by Business Manager Peter Brennan (attachment 3).

(M. Sherman)
(D. Leith)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Judith Newton
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova

Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

VI. Public Hearing

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

VII. Unfinished Business

Member Newton asked the status of her request at the November 26, 2007 meeting remanding the HiFi Program Description to the Education Subcommittee for consideration. The Superintendent reported that it had been referred back to the administration and Director of Operations John Locke would follow-up on the issue.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business brought before the Committee.

IX. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations, not to return to public session.

(R. Imber)

(J. Sova)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Margaret Watson
Thomas Ackerman
Robert Carter
Colleen Cipro
Steven Hammond
Robert Imber
Mark James
Duncan Leith
Judith Newton
John Nunnari
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Joseph Sova
Kathleen Sweeney

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 9:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

TGP:ss