

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1243 Monday, October 28, 2013

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School

Committee Members Present:

Lance Harris, Chair	Matthew Lindberg
Robert Pelczarski, Vice-chair	James Mason
Scott Brown	Robert McCarthy
Lisa Call	Kenneth Mills
Matthew Ehrenworth	Tiffany Ralli
Robert Imber	Robert Remillard
Stacey Jackson	Christina Smith
Julianne Kelley	Margaret Watson
Sarah LaMountain	Charles Witkes

Committee Members Absent:

William Clute	Deidre Kosky
Thomas Curran	Erik Scheinfeldt

Administration Present:

Anthony Gasbarro, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Jeffrey Carlson, Director of Human Resources
Darryll McCall, Deputy Superintendent
Joseph Scanlon, Director of Business and Finance
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

Student Representatives Present:

Jon O'Brien

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

Chair Harris called the meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:10 PM. He noted the meeting was being taped and shown live. Members were provided with copies of the revised meeting agenda (attachment 2).

I. Public Hearing

No members of the public wished to address the School Committee.

II. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of 1242nd Regular Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on October 15, 2013

Motion: To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the School Committee held on October 15, 2013.

(R. Imber)
(M. Lindberg)

The minutes of the regular meeting of the School Committee held October 15, 2013 were approved, by consensus, with Members Ehrenworth, Mills and Smith abstaining.

B. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on October 15, 2013

Motion: To approve the minutes of Executive Session of the School Committee held on October 15, 2013, not to be released.

(R. Imber)
(S. Brown)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski
Scott Brown
Robert Imber
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Tiffany Ralli
Margaret Watson
Charles Witkes

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Stacey Jackson
Kenneth Mills
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith

Motion passed 12-0-6.

III. Treasurer's Report/Financial Statements

Chair Harris reminded the Committee that if there are questions regarding the report of the Director of Business and Finance, members should contact the Interim Superintendent; if there are questions regarding the Treasurer's Report, members should contact the Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Chair's Opening Remarks

Presentation by Deputy Superintendent Darryll McCall *MCAS*

7:15 PM Member Kelley left the table.

Deputy Superintendent McCall showed a PowerPoint presentation titled *MCAS Analysis* (attachment 3). Deputy Superintendent McCall invited School Committee members who have questions to ask their questions while he was presenting.

7:16 PM Member Kelley returned to the table.

Deputy Superintendent McCall addressed the School Committee, speaking about spring 2013 MCAS results which were recently received by the District and distributed to parents, and charting the progress of three WRHS classes (class of 2015, class of 2017, and class of 2018). At the conclusion of his presentation, Deputy Superintendent McCall answered questions posed by School Committee members. The MCAS presentation concluded at 7:51 PM.

B. Student Representatives

Student Representative Jon O'Brien spoke about "spirit week" which took place the week of October 21 to 25, and about Homecoming festivities that took place October 26th – all of which were very successful. He also reported that first quarter grades will close on October 29th.

C. Management Subcommittee (L. Harris, Chair, R. Pelczarski, Vice-chair, R. Imber, S. Jackson, J. Mason, K. Mills, E. Scheinfeldt, M. Watson)

Management Subcommittee Chair Harris reported this subcommittee has not met since the last School Committee meeting.

Motion: To approve the second reading of Amended Policy1170 **Policy Relating to School Committee Operations Use of Electronic Messaging Between and Among School Committee Members**, waiving the reading.

(M. Watson)

(R. Imber)

Vote:

In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski
Scott Brown
Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Margaret Watson
Charles Witkes

Opposed:

None

Motion passed unanimously.

Member Kelley reminded the subcommittee that the Superintendent Evaluation document needs to be addressed/developed.

- D. Education Subcommittee (R. Imber, Chair, M. Watson, Vice-chair, L. Call, R. Remillard, C. Smith)

Education Subcommittee Chair Imber reported this subcommittee has not met since the last School Committee meeting. This subcommittee will meet next on November 12, 2013 at 6:00 PM.

7:56 PM Student Representative O'Brien left the meeting.

- E. Business/Finance Subcommittee (E. Scheinfeldt, Chair, W. Clute, Vice-chair, J. Kelley, S. LaMountain, J. Mason, R. McCarthy, T. Ralli, C. Smith, C. Witkes)

In Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Scheinfeldt's absence, Member Kelley (who served as Temporary Chair at the October 24, 2013 meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee) reported on the October 24th meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee. Topics addressed include amendments to the Audit Advisory Board policy, which will be brought before the full School Committee in November. Member Kelley also spoke about the RFP

for Transitional Auditing Services, copies of which were provided to the full School Committee (attachment 4).

Motion: To request that the Office of the Auditor of the Commonwealth conduct an independent audit of the Wachusett Regional School District for Fiscal Years 2010 to the present.

(J. Kelley)

(L. Call)

Discussion ensued. It was explained that the motion on the floor would be to approve submitting a request for an independent audit to the Office of the Auditor of the Commonwealth. It was explained to the full School Committee that “a two-thirds vote of the regional school district committee members” would be required in order for the state to consider such an audit (attachment 5). Further discussion took place.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski
Scott Brown
Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Charles Witkes

Opposed:

Margaret Watson

Motion passed 17-1.

1. WRSD Educational Foundation Trust

- F. Legal Affairs Subcommittee (K. Mills, Chair, M. Lindberg, Vice-chair, S. Brown, M. Ehrenworth, J. Kelley)

Legal Affairs Subcommittee Chair Mills reported this subcommittee has not met since the last School Committee meeting.

Motion: To approve the second reading of Draft Policy *Policy Relating to School Committee Operations Collective Bargaining*, waiving the reading.

(K. Mills)

(M. Lindberg)

Member Watson commented that following Attorney Stonberg's presentation at the special School Committee meeting this date, the Committee may consider keeping in the sentence: "Members of the School Committee may serve as observers during negotiations." Member Imber, who made the motion to eliminate the sentence from the draft policy at the October 15, 2013 meeting of the School Committee, explained his reasoning for recommending deletion of the sentence; he felt the sentence caused confusion. Additional discussion took place.

Vote:

In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski
Scott Brown
Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Margaret Watson
Charles Witkes

Opposed:

None

Motion passed unanimously.

The Legal Affairs Subcommittee will meet next on November 4, 2013
at 7:00 PM.

- G. Facilities & Security Subcommittee (J. Mason, Chair, M. Ehrenworth, Vice-chair, W. Clute, D. Kosky, M. Lindberg, R. McCarthy, R. Remillard)

Facilities & Security Subcommittee Chair Mason reported on the October 21st meeting of this subcommittee and told that the next meeting is posted for November 18th at 7:00 PM.

H. Audit Advisory Board (J. Kelley, T. Ralli)

Audit Advisory Board Chair Kelley reported on the October 23rd meeting of the Audit Advisory Board.

Motion: To recommend acceptance of the *Management Letter, Report on Examination of Basic Financial Statements, and Reports on Federal Award Programs* for fiscal year ended June 30, 2013.

(J. Kelley)

(L. Call)

Vote:

In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski
Scott Brown
Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Charles Witkes

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Margaret Watson

Motion passed 17-1.

I. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

1. Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Regional Agreement (J. Kelley, Chair, W. Clute, R. Imber)

Chair Harris reported approval of the Regional Agreement with amendments passed at May 2013 Annual Town Meetings has been received from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Chair Harris thanked all who served on the Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Regional Agreement and discharged the subcommittee.

2. Superintendent Screening Subcommittee

Superintendent Screening Subcommittee Chair Harris reported the subcommittee will be conducting pre-screening interviews of seven candidates on October 29th, October 30th, and November 2nd. A special meeting of the School Committee will be posted for 6:00 PM on Monday, November 4, 2013, when finalists for the position of Superintendent of Schools will be announced.

J. Building Committees

1. Mountview Building Committee (M. Watson)

Member Watson gave a report on the October 23rd meeting of this building committee. She reported that the project is currently on schedule.

2. Green Repair School Building Committee

Director of Business and Finance Scanlon had included an update on these projects in his report, included in the October 24th Superintendent's Report. Essentially, these projects are closed at this point.

L. School Council Reports:

Central Tree Middle School (J. Kelley), Chocksett Middle School (S. LaMountain), Davis Hill Elementary School (C. Smith), Dawson Elementary School (D. Kosky), Glenwood Elementary School (R. Remillard), Houghton Elementary School (L. Call), Mayo Elementary School (T. Curran), Mountview Middle School (M. Watson), Naquag Elementary School (M. Ehrenworth), Paxton Center School (W. Clute), Thomas Prince School (R. Imber/M. Lindberg), Wachusett Regional High School (K. Mills), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (S. Jackson), Early Childhood Center (TBD)

Member Mills – Wachusett Regional High School, October 8, 2013

Member Smith– Davis Hill Elementary School

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

In order to make discussion of the Superintendent's Report efficient, Chair Harris polled members about topics they would be referencing, so that each particular topic could be addressed at once.

Interim Superintendent Gasbarro gave an overview of what was included in his Report.

Fees charged to students at WRHS were discussed. Member Watson gave some history about how the elimination of some fees came about, and that this matter had been addressed by the Education Subcommittee.

Use of the high school site an evening in August 2014 to host a part of Oriol Health Care's 50th anniversary celebration was raised and questions were asked. Interim Superintendent Gasbarro explained this conversation is in the very preliminary stages. At a member's questioning, he confirmed that alcohol consumption had not been a part of Oriol Health Care's request to use the site to host an event. Concern about the possibility of damage/liability during a fireworks display was noted.

At Member Jackson's inquiry, Director of Business and Finance Scanlon spoke about the FY14 budget being frozen, as of September 20th; that salaries had been loaded into MUNIS mid-August; he reviewed briefly the fund balances report. Member Kelley made a comment about forecasting problems with respect to staffing/salaries and she wanted to make her opinion known that this is an area that needs to be addressed and corrected. Member Mills had a question about special education tuition spending.

Member Mills asked Interim Superintendent Gasbarro if he knew how a student would qualify for an Adams Scholarship if the student does not participate in MCAS testing because of taking part in PARCC testing. Interim Superintendent Gasbarro reported the state is aware that this is a matter that needs to be addressed and considered, and MCAS/PARCC comparisons, of some sort, will need to be made.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

Motion: To approve the appropriation of School Building Authority funds in the amount of \$693,572 to the Town of Holden for reimbursement for the Davis Hill Elementary School

(S. Jackson)

(K. Mills)

Vote:

In favor:

Lance Harris

Robert Pelczarski

Scott Brown

Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Margaret Watson
Charles Witkes

Opposed:
None

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion: To approve the appropriation of School Building Authority funds in the amount of \$488,442 to the Town of Holden for reimbursement for the Dawson Elementary School

(K. Mills)
(S. Jackson)

Vote:
In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski
Scott Brown
Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Margaret Watson
Charles Witkes

Opposed:
None

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion: To approve the appropriation of School Building Authority funds in the amount of \$688,982 to the Town of Holden for reimbursement for the Mayo Elementary School

(M. Watson)
(K. Mills)

Vote:
In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski
Scott Brown
Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Margaret Watson
Charles Witkes

Opposed:
None

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Public Hearing

No members of the public wished to address the School Committee.

VII. Unfinished Business

Member Call raised the matter of an Open Meeting Law complaint that had been filed with the Office of the Attorney General in April 2013. Member Call explained that in April 2013 she was a reporter for a local newspaper and she was covering the April 2, 2013 special School Committee at which the complaint was read aloud. Member Call commented that, to her knowledge, no public apology had been made to those accused of violating the Open

Meeting Law. Member Call, now speaking as a School Committee member, is of the opinion an apology should be made. Some discussion took place.

VIII. New Business

Motion: The Wachusett Regional School District shall not participate in school choice for the 2014-15 school year.

(J. Kelley)
(L. Call)

Member Kelley spoke to the motion, giving a brief history of the District's participation in school choice. She voiced her concern that the District should stay away from using school choice monies as a budget crutch. In the case of Thomas Prince School, Member Kelley stated in-District transfer applications, requesting that students from Holden, Paxton, Rutland, Sterling be allowed to attend Thomas Prince School, may take care of TPS's declining enrollment. Discussion ensued, with several members participating in the discussion. It was suggested that District administration gather information/data about the District's participation in the school choice program and prepare to make a presentation to the full School Committee at the November 12th regular meeting. Member Watson stressed the importance of evaluating what the consequences would be for Thomas Prince School if the motion to not participate in school choice passed. Member LaMountain stated school choice needs to be looked at as a regional issue, not a Princeton issue. More discussion took place.

Motion: To lay on the table the motion that the Wachusett Regional School District shall not participate in school choice for the 2014-2015 school year until District administration's presentation to the full School Committee about school choice.

(M. Ehrenworth)
(L. Call)

Chair Harris explained that when a vote is taken to "lay on the table" a motion, that motion will appear on regular School Committee meeting agendas, under Unfinished Business, until the matter is settled.

Member Kelley's opinion is that a decision about school choice participation for the 2014-2015 school year should be addressed by December 2013. Deputy Superintendent McCall assured the School Committee District administration could be ready to make a presentation to the full School Committee at the regular meeting on November 12, 2013. Discussion continued. Chair Harris explained that the motion to table is not debatable.

Vote:

In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski
Scott Brown
Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber

Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Margaret Watson
Charles Witkes

Opposed:

None

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion: The Superintendent shall present the Annual Report to the School Committee for review and approval before publication.

(J. Kelley)

(K. Mills)

It was explained that if this motion passes, the process of how this review and approval will be done next year will be determined at that time.

Vote:

In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski
Scott Brown
Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Margaret Watson
Charles Witkes

Opposed:

None

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion: To approve the FY14 appropriation staff authorization and expenditures by category, dated August 8, 2013.

(J. Kelley)
(S. Jackson)

Member Kelley spoke to the motion, and then informed the Committee that she could accept a decision by the School Committee to defer action on this motion to a future date. Chair Harris called members' attention to attachments 7 & 8 of the October 24, 2013 Superintendent's Report – Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of the *Annual Report and FY14 Appropriation*.

9:05 PM Member Mason left the table.

Chair Harris explained three possible actions: withdraw the motion; postpone action to a time certain; lay the motion on the table (similar to action taken on the school choice motion).

9:08 PM Member Mason returned to the table.

Motion: To postpone action on the motion on the table, "*To approve the FY14 appropriation staff authorization and expenditures by category, dated August 8, 2013,*" to a time certain, November 25, 2013.

(M. Ehrenworth)
(J. Kelley)

Vote:

In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski
Scott Brown
Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Margaret Watson

Charles Witkes

Opposed:
None

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion: The School Committee shall advise the Superintendent of its budget priorities on or before December 9, 2013.

(S. Jackson)
(J. Kelley)

Member Jackson spoke to the motion, commenting that in the past the School Committee has been reactive not proactive when developing the budget. She is of the opinion that the School Committee and District administration need priorities in order to develop a budget. Discussion ensued, including how to proceed on setting budget priorities. Chair Harris suggested each subcommittee meet and consider budget priorities, to be brought to the full School Committee for consideration. Member Imber commented while he understands and supports the motion, he thought the December 9th deadline may be an issue. Member Jackson stated the intent of the motion was to provide administration with budget priorities, before too much time is put into developing the budget by District administration.

9:20 PM Interim Superintendent Gasbarro left the table.

Chair Harris suggested the Annual School Committee Retreat be scheduled for Saturday, January 11, 2014, and the full School Committee be prepared to discuss the budget at the regular School Committee meeting on February 10, 2014. If Member Jackson agrees with that suggestion, the date in the motion on the floor would need to be amended from December 9, 2013 to January 11, 2014. Discussion ensued. Member Kelley said that presentations that principals made before the Business/Finance Subcommittee in the winter of 2013 are still pertinent and are still available for School Committee review, in Dropbox. Member Watson recommended getting input from School Councils. Member Jackson offered to withdraw the motion, which members accepted.

IX. Adjournment

Chair Harris informed the Committee the meeting would not adjourn to executive session at the conclusion of this meeting.

Motion: To adjourn.

(J. Mason)
(M. Ehrenworth)

Vote:

In favor:

Lance Harris
Robert Pelczarski

Scott Brown
Lisa Call
Matthew Ehrenworth
Robert Imber
Stacey Jackson
Julianne Kelley
Sarah LaMountain
Matthew Lindberg
James Mason
Robert McCarthy
Kenneth Mills
Tiffany Ralli
Robert Remillard
Christina Smith
Margaret Watson
Charles Witkes

Opposed:
None

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned to executive session at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony A. Gasbarro
Interim Superintendent

AAG:rlp