

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #286 Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Media Center  
Wachusett Regional High School

*Committee Members Present:*

Margaret Watson, Chair	Robert Imber
John Nunnari, Vice-chair	Stacey Jackson
Cynthia Bazinet	Julianne Kelley
Robert Carter	Duncan Leith
Colleen Cipro	Michael Pantos
William Clute	Michelle Sciabarrasi
Sherry Conrad	Joseph Sova
Kristine Goodwin (7:32 PM)	Kori Stuart
Steven Hammond	Dawn Torres-Gale

*Committee Members Absent:*

Robert Pelczarski	Norman Plourde
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*Administration Present:*

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Superintendent of Schools  
Susan Sullivan, Director of Human Resources  
Peter Brennan, Business Manager  
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

*Guests Present:*

Robert Ferina, Educators Financial Resource  
Mike Morgan, President-New England Region, Educators Financial Resource  
Robert Gianchiglia, Vice President-New England Region, Educators Financial Resource

Chair Watson called the special meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:03 PM. Chair Watson explained that because this meeting will not be videotaped and microphones will not be used, speakers should speak loudly and clearly for the benefit of all. The meeting agenda, which will not be altered, was distributed (attachment 1).

Motion: To enter executive session to discuss strategies with respect to collective bargaining, to return to public session.

(M. Pantos)  
(D. Torres-Gale)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari

Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Michelle Sciabarrasi  
Joseph Sova  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Member Leith asked Chair Watson if he should recuse himself, as his wife is a member of the WREA. Member Leith did not have to recuse himself since his wife has submitted paperwork informing the District of her intent to retire the end of this school year.

The Committee adjourned to executive session at 7:06 PM

The Committee returned to public session at 9:10 PM.

Member Sciabarrasi left the meeting.

Members were provide with copies of *Proposed FY10 Assessment 11.03.09* (referred to as "Scenario #1") and *Proposed FY10 Assessment 11.03.09* (referred to as "Scenario #2") (attachments 2 & 3).

9:11 PM Superintendent Pandiscio returned to the table.

Chair Watson turned the meeting over to Superintendent Pandiscio. Superintendent Pandiscio called the Committee's attention to Scenario #1 and explained this scenario proposes the District go to the Member Towns for an assessment increase of \$1,087,576 to make up for recent Chapter 71 cuts. He assured the Committee that this is not a scenario he is suggesting or recommending, nor does he believe such a request would have success being passed by the Member Towns. Superintendent Pandiscio then asked the Committee to refer to Scenario #2 and explained that this scenario would have the Member Towns consider in essence returning to the District the \$397,570 which the School Committee has recently voted as a Debt Service assessment reduction to Member Towns.

Many members of the Committee voiced opinions, asked questions, and made suggestions how this fiscal crisis might be addressed.

Motion: To extend the meeting for 20 minutes, to 10:20 PM.

(C. Bazinet)  
(S. Hammond)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
William Clute  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Stacey Jackson  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Joseph Sova  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

When Member Imber asked the Superintendent what he is looking to happen this evening, the Superintendent explained that resolution to this problem is not needed this evening or even at either of the November School Committee meetings, but he did stress that this matter must be addressed at some time in the near future.

10:03 PM Member Goodwin left the table.

Member Stuart voiced she would like to see a Scenario #3 which would show what would happen if Member Towns do not approve either Scenario #1 or Scenario #2; Scenario #3 would be the worst case scenario. Member Bazinet agreed that a Scenario #3 is needed. Superintendent Pandiscio said that if the School Committee wants a Scenario #3 prepared, an option that includes staff layoffs, he needs to be directed by the School Committee to prepare such.

10:05 PM Member Goodwin returned to the table.

Member Bazinet believes these Chapter 71 cuts pose an inequity issue and suing the state should be considered. Perhaps District Counsel McCabe should be asked for a legal opinion on this possibility.

Motion: That the Member Towns be put on notice that the District is considering requesting the recent assessment reduction of \$397,570 be returned to the District in light of the current budget shortfall.

(M. Pantos)

The motion died due to lack of a second.

10:18 PM Member Jackson left the meeting.

Superintendent Pandiscio said that if the Committee is not “ever” going to ask the Member Towns for more than \$397,570, then the Committee should vote this evening to give notice, especially since the Town of Rutland will be holding a Special Town Meeting on November 9, 2009.

10:20 PM Member Clute left the meeting.

Motion: That the District Treasurer send new assessment letters to the Member Towns, based on Scenario #2, giving the towns notice of the need for the District to request the return of the recent \$397,570 assessment reduction. Further, the Superintendent of Schools will correspond with the Member Towns giving notice that it may become necessary for the District to go back to the towns seeking an additional \$690,006, to make up for the budget shortfall as a result of recent Chapter 71 cuts.

(M. Pantos)

(K. Goodwin)

Discussion of the motion ensued.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Colleen Cipro  
Kristine Goodwin  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Kori Stuart

*Opposed:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber

Joseph Sova  
Dawn Torres-Gale

(The motion failed 6-9)

Motion: To extend the meeting for 20 minutes, to 10:45 PM.

(J. Sova)  
(C. Bazinet)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Joseph Sova  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*

None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Motion: That District administration create a new scenario showing an assessment increase of \$500,000 to \$600,000 to the Member Towns and the remaining budget shortfall be addressed by personnel and other budget cuts.

(S. Hammond)  
(C. Bazinet)

Discussion ensued.

Motion: To call the question.

(K. Goodwin)  
(K. Stuart)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari

Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Joseph Sova  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

Roll call vote on main motion:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Joseph Sova

*Opposed:*

Robert Carter  
Kristine Goodwin  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
John Nunnari  
Michael Pantos  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

(The motion failed 7-8.)

Motion: The Superintendent be directed to development one or more additional scenarios to address the \$1,087,576 budget shortfall. The Superintendent is also directed to correspond with Member Towns explaining the District's budget shortfall as a result of recent Chapter 71 cuts and to let the Member Towns know of the possibility that the District may need to go to Member Towns for additional funds to make up the \$690,006 shortfall.

(R. Imber)

(K. Goodwin)

Additional motion language was discussed following which Member Imber, the maker of the motion, with the agreement of Member Goodwin, the seconder of the motion, made a friendly amendment to the motion on the floor adding the following language “to avoid mid-year personnel cuts.”

Motion: The Superintendent be directed to development one or more additional scenarios to address the \$1,087,576 budget shortfall. The Superintendent is also directed to correspond with Member Towns explaining the District’s budget shortfall as a result of recent Chapter 71 cuts and to let the Member Towns know of the possibility that the District may need to go to Member Towns for additional funds to make up the \$690,006 shortfall to avoid mid-year personnel cuts.

(R. Imber)  
(K. Goodwin)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Robert Imber  
Duncan Leith  
Joseph Sova  
Kori Stuart

*Opposed:*

Margaret Watson  
Robert Carter  
Steven Hammond  
Julianne Kelley  
Michael Pantos  
Dawn Torres-Gale

(The motion passed 9-6.)

Motion: To adjourn.

(R. Carter)  
(D. Leith)

Vote:

*In favor:*

Margaret Watson  
John Nunnari  
Cynthia Bazinet  
Robert Carter

Colleen Cipro  
Shirley Conrad  
Kristine Goodwin  
Steven Hammond  
Robert Imber  
Julianne Kelley  
Duncan Leith  
Michael Pantos  
Joseph Sova  
Kori Stuart  
Dawn Torres-Gale

*Opposed:*  
None

(The motion passed unanimously.)

The meeting adjourned at 10:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

TGP:rlp