

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN □ PAXTON □ PRINCETON □ RUTLAND □ STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #328

Wednesday, December 9, 2020
7:00 PM

MEETING CONDUCTED REMOTELY, VIA GOOGLE MEET

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Megan Weeks, Chair	Kenneth Mills
Michael Dennis, Vice-chair	Benjamin Mitchel
Melissa Ayala	Karl Ottmar
Krista Bennett	Michael Pantos, Jr.
Scott Brown	Deidre Shapiro
Maleah Gustafson	Asima Silva
Sherrie Haber	Christina Smith
Robert Imber	Jeffrey Sullivan
Laura Kirshenbaum	Kelly Williamson
Matthew Lavoie	Linda Woodland
Linda Long-Bellil	Adam Young

Committee Members Absent:

None

Administration Present:

Darryll McCall, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Berlo, Deputy Superintendent
Jeff Carlson, Director of Human Resources
Brendan Keenan, Director of Social Emotional Learning
Christine Smith, Administrator of Special Education
Barry Sclar, Supervisor of Information Technology
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

Student Representatives Present:

Kenichi Gomi Kathryn Mangus

Chair Weeks called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Chair Weeks announced the meeting was being conducted remotely, via Google Meet, and was being broadcast live on Channel 194 and holdentv.com. Members of the public could access the meeting via YouTube. Chair Weeks also spoke about members of the public submitting comments to questions@wrsd.net.

Chair Weeks explained the format of this meeting, further explaining that this meeting is a continuation of the regular School Committee meeting conducted December 7, 2020. At the December 7, 2020 regular School Committee meeting, several items at the beginning of the agenda were addressed. The Committee will pick up the agenda where it left off on December 7, 2020. The first order will be continuation of the Superintendent's Report. At 7:30 PM two agenda items brought before the Committee by two members of the public will be addressed.

I. Executive session

Addressed previously at the December 7, 2020 regular School Committee meeting.

II. Public Hearing

Addressed previously at the December 7, 2020 regular School Committee meeting.

III. Chair's Opening Remarks

Deferred.

IV. Student Representatives (K. Gomi, K. Mangus)

Updates were provided at the December 7, 2020 regular meeting.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

- Discussion of metrics for reopening for hybrid learning

Superintendent McCall reported on his meeting this date with the Boards of Health. He reported metrics for reopening was a major part of the discussion. A document/matrix is being created, with input from those who participate in these meetings. The Superintendent's next meeting with representatives from the Boards of Health will be December 15, 2020, when the shared document will be reviewed and discussed, after which Superintendent McCall will provide a report to the Committee about the decision making matrix for reopening of schools.

- Discussion of school plans for hybrid students with remote, and for fully remote students, and comprehensive return to school planning status
- Discussion regarding the state of education within the school district
- DESE audit risk and potential cost due to not being hybrid

Superintendent McCall reported on information shared at recent virtual meetings hosted by Commissioner Riley, and he also reported that the risk of being audited is low.

Chair Weeks opened the floor to questions.

Member Mills is looking for a deeper discussion about metrics to be used/data driven facts that will drive decision(s) about the return to school.

Member Gustafson asked for clarification about time-on-learning requirements. After Superintendent McCall spoke to this topic, Member Gustafson asked if the Committee could act on amending the school calendar at this meeting, to correct the Wednesday half-day schedule. Chair Weeks explained this action by the School Committee cannot be addressed at this meeting, since the item is not included on the meeting agenda.

Vice-chair Dennis addressed the Committee, speaking about schools being closed for several months, that 350 students have left the District to be homeschooled or attend private schools. Vice-chair Dennis spoke about the statement of no confidence by the WREA. He spoke about plans for the future of the District, and he expressed his concerns.

Member Ottmar echoed Member Mills' questions and concern about metrics to be used for the reopening of schools. Member Ottmar had a motion he would like to bring forward, a motion that would propose the District would adopt a criteria of 60 weekly cases across the District as the threshold for determining remote and hybrid. Member Ottmar further explained the intent of his motion is if there are under 60 cases, District-wide, schools would operate in the hybrid model, and if there are over 60 cases, District-wide, schools would operate in the remote model. Chair Weeks did not believe a motion could be brought before the Committee at this point in the agenda, when the Superintendent's Report is being discussed.

Motion: That the threshold or benchmark for hybrid be when there are less than 60 cases, District-wide, and the threshold or benchmark for remote be when there are more than 60 weekly cases across the District.

(K. Ottmar)

Some brief discussion took place.

Motion: To appeal the decision of the Chair that a motion cannot be brought forward at this point in the agenda.

(K. Ottmar)

(M. Dennis)

Chair Weeks explained this motion is not debatable, and the Committee will be voting on the motion to appeal, not on Member Ottmar's motion.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Michael Dennis
Maleah Gustafson
Laura Kirshenbaum
Karl Ottmar
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Adam Young

Opposed:

Megan Weeks
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Robert Imber
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Benjamin Mitchel
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland

Abstained:

Sherrie Haber

The motion failed 6-15-1.

Discussion of metrics continued.

Member Pantos asked if metrics and decision(s) to close schools can be on a school-by-school basis, which Superintendent McCall confirmed can happen if there is that need.

Member Lavoie asked about data on student achievement and how are students trending. He asked if data has been reviewed by grade level to determine student achievement or lack of achievement due to being remote. Superintendent McCall reported a detailed report is being worked on to determine this information, and the report and information will be shared with the Committee.

Member Imber spoke about metrics and the need to have data that is quantified to drive the decision about the reopening of schools. Member Imber also thanked the Superintendent for addressing and advocating for hold harmless in light of declining enrollment numbers during the pandemic.

Member Long-Bellil asked if discussions about the spread of COVID and how it is being transmitted is discussed at the Superintendent's meetings with the Boards of Health, which Superintendent McCall confirmed is a topic of conversation at these meetings. He mentioned that family involvement and contagion is being widely seen.

At 7:41 PM Chair Weeks explained that two members of the public had requested a motion and an agenda item be included on the meeting agenda, under New Business. Chair Weeks explained that the agenda would be altered at this point in the meeting, and New Business would be addressed at this time.

Motion: To support the WRSD Covid-19 Community Volunteer Task Force of licensed medical personnel to work with the existing COVID re-opening task force on focused efforts including, but not limited to: 1) contact tracing with the local board of health resources and/or assisting the District as overflow resources; 2) supporting school nursing staff as substitutes or as administration sees the need; and 3) support existing and ongoing efforts in conjunction with the re-opening task force.

(M. Lavoie)
(K. Mills)

Chair Weeks invited Natalie Dellecese to address the School Committee. Ms. Dellecese explained how the motion came to fruition and the intent of the motion and those who are a part of this task force.

Chair Weeks make a comment about the motion and then opened the floor to comments and questions.

Member Lavoie spoke to the motion.

Member Pantos asked what the limitations and roles of the WRSD Covid-19 Community Volunteer Task Force would be. Chair Weeks confirmed the task force would be a supporting group and would not be making final decisions on behalf of the District or the School Committee.

Member Young spoke about reopening of schools and he is in support of this offer of assistance.

Member Long-Bellil expressed her thanks to Ms. Dellecese and the task force.

Member Brown applauded the motion and the offer of the task force.

Member Imber asked the Superintendent for his opinion and if he feels there are down sides to this offer. Superintendent McCall reported members of the Boards of Health expressed appreciation of this offer and he as the Superintendent is in support of this.

Member Gustafson spoke about the District Reopening Task Force and if this volunteer task force might work with the District Reopening Task Force. Director Keenan, who has had meetings with the representatives of the volunteer task force, feels that this offer will enhance the District Reopening Task Force. Director Keenan reported no meetings of the District Reopening Task Force are scheduled, but when the next meeting is scheduled, the volunteer task force will be included in the meeting(s).

Member Mills expressed thanks to the volunteer task force. He asked if school nurses have been consulted about this offer/plan. Director Keenan explained that the school nurses have been involved in these discussions, and he reported a benefit of this relationship, at this point, has been the additional nurses being added to the nurse substitute list.

Member Ayala asked if substitute nurses, who might work in hospitals or medical offices, would be COVID tested before subbing in schools. The concern was acknowledged, but has not yet been addressed or discussed.

Member Woodland asked if the District Reopening Task Force would have the opportunity to discuss this offer. Director Keenan reported this has not yet been discussed with the District Reopening Task Force members.

Member Haber asked if HIPPA would come into play with contact tracing by members of the volunteer task force, which Ms. Dellecese spoke to, and which Director Keenan explained would be through the Boards of Health, at this time.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson

Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:
None

The motion passed unanimously.

The next order of business was an agenda item brought before the Committee by Princeton resident Phil Gransewicz: *Reopening WRSD for hybrid learning for grades K – 2 no later than December 14, 2020*. Chair Weeks welcomed Mr. Gransewicz and invited him to address the Committee. Mr. Gransewicz read a prepared statement. At the conclusion of Mr. Gransewicz's statement, Chair Weeks opened the floor to discussions.

Member Pantos spoke in support of Mr. Gransewicz's statement.

Member Mitchel questioned the Chair to explain how this agenda item is to be addressed.

Member Gustafson spoke of action by the School Committee in August about phasing in of students to return to school.

Motion: Return to school on January 4, 2021 for Phase 2 students with moderate needs and high need students as defined by DESE, with Phase 3 students returning to school no more than two weeks later.

(M. Gustafson)
(R. Imber)

Member Gustafson spoke to the motion. Chair Weeks opened the floor to discussion and questions.

Chair Weeks asked Superintendent McCall if changing the date for reopening would be impacted because of the need to provide teachers with notice of the reopening of schools. Superintendent McCall confirmed the December vacation days would be included in the required two week notification.

Motion: To amend the motion by adding "to include Phase 3 students and K – 2 students, no later than January 4, 2021."

(M. Lavoie)
(L. Kirshenbaum)

Chair Weeks explained discussion is open to the amendment on the floor.

Member Lavoie spoke to the motion to amend. Other members offered a significant number of comments and asked many questions.

Member Imber, with assistance from Member Long-Bellil, offered the following, as an amendment to the amendment or as a new motion:

Motion: Return to school be contingent on meeting the health metrics that are established by the boards of health and the Superintendent no later than December 21, 2020.

(R. Imber)

Before this motion was seconded, additional discussion took place. The Chair addressed and took points of order from the members.

Chair Weeks read aloud the following:

Motion to amend the amendment: Return to school on January 4, 2021 for Phase 2 students with moderate needs and high need students as defined by DESE with Phase 3 students returning to school no more than two weeks later. Return to school be contingent on meeting the health metrics that are established by the Boards of Health and the Superintendent no later than December 21, 2020 and approved by the School Committee.

(R. Imber)

Chair Weeks clarified that the motion to amend made by Members Lavoie and Kirshenbaum has not yet been voted on. Discussion that is taking place is about amending that amendment to the original motion.

Additional discussion took place, including Member Long-Bellil seconding Member Imber's motion on the floor.

Motion to amend the amendment: Return to school on January 4, 2021 for Phase 2 students with moderate needs and high need students as defined by DESE with Phase 3 students returning to school no more than two weeks later. Return to school be contingent on meeting the health metrics that are established by the Boards of Health and the Superintendent no later than December 21, 2020 and approved by the School Committee.

(R. Imber)

(L. Long-Bellil)

At Vice-chair Dennis' inquiry, Chair Weeks clarified and confirmed that Member Lavoie's motion to amend Member Gustafson's motion had not yet been voted on.

Member Bennett asked if only students in Phase 2 would be returning to school on January 4th or would students in Phase 3 also be included in the students to return to school on January 4th. Chair Weeks stated she believed it would be both.

Other members asked questions and voiced comments, including Member Shapiro, Member Brown, Member Haber, Member Ayala.

Member Gustafson made a point of order. With so much confusion during these discussions, it might be best to begin discussions and consideration of the motions from the beginning. Chair Weeks spoke about parliamentary procedure and the option to “untie the knot” to go back to the original motion and begin again. Chair Weeks acknowledged Member Gustafson’s point of order and researched Robert’s Rules for direction.

At Member Sullivan’s query, there was discussion about the timing of a December 21, 2020 approval of students returning to school on January 4, 2021 and how that would impact sufficient notification to the WREA about students returning to school.

Member Lavoie made a point of order and a point of information.

Motion: To call the question.

(S. Haber)

(M. Ayala)

Chair Weeks explained the motion to call the question is not debatable.

Roll call vote call the question

In favor:

Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Sherrie Haber
Linda Long-Bellil
Benjamin Mitchel
Christina Smith
Kelly Williamson

Opposed:

Michael Dennis
Maleah Gustafson
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Kenneth Mills
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Jeffrey Sullivan
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Abstained:

Megan Weeks
Michael Pantos, Jr.

The motion failed 8-12-2.

At Vice-chair Dennis' request, Chair Weeks re-read the ruling which she posted in chat. *"An amendment to an amendment is a motion to change, to add words to, or omit words from the first amendment. The rules for an amendment (above) apply here, except that the amendment to an amendment is not itself amendable and that it takes precedence over the first amendment."*

At Member Young's request, Chair Weeks requested that what will be voted on be put in writing for members to read.

Chair Weeks explained that the amendment to the amendment is Member Lavoie's amendment plus Member Imber's amendment to the amendment, married together.

Chair Weeks read aloud what will be voted on, and the motion was also entered in Chat for members to read.

Motion: Phase 3 students and K-2 students return no later than January 4, 2021, the return to school be contingent on meeting the health metrics that are established by the Boards of Health and the Superintendent no later than December 21, 2020 and approved by the School Committee.

Chair Weeks cut off debate.

Roll call vote on amendment of the amendment:

In favor:

Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Jeffrey Sullivan
Adam Young

Opposed:

Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Asima Silva
Christina Smith

Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland

Abstained:

Megan Weeks
Michael Pantos, Jr.

The motion failed 7-13-2

Chair Weeks explained what was now on the floor was the motion to amend made by Member Lavoie and Member Long-Bellil. It was clarified that the motion by Member Lavoie and Member Long-Bellil does not eliminate any language in Member Gustafson's original motion; it only adds language to Member Gustafson's original motion.

Motion: To amend the motion by adding "to include Phase 3 students and K – 2 students, no later than January 4, 2021."

(M. Lavoie)
(L. Kirshenbaum)

Chair Weeks closed debate and explained what will be voted on is adding "to include Phase 3 students and K – 2 students, no later than January 4, 2021" to Member Gustafson's original motion.

Roll call vote on amendment:

In favor:

Michael Dennis
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Jeffrey Sullivan

Opposed:

Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Abstained:

Megan Weeks
Michael Pantos, Jr.

The motion failed 4-16-2.

Chair Weeks re-read the original motion which the members will be voting on.

Motion: Return to school on January 4, 2021 for Phase 2 students with moderate needs and high need students as defined by DESE with Phase 3 students returning to school no more than two weeks later.

(M. Gustafson)
(R. Imber)

Motion to amend: To add “and kindergarten – grade 2 students returning January 4, 2021 and all other students returning on January 19, 2021” and striking “with Phase 3 students returning to school no more than two weeks later.”

(M. Dennis)
(S. Brown)

Vice-chair Dennis spoke to the amendment, citing the opinions of several health professionals about the return of students to school. Member Woodland expressed her frustration about the lack of data to support, or not, the reopening of schools. Several other members also joined in the discussions.

Roll call vote on amendment:

In favor:

Michael Dennis
Scott Brown
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Kenneth Mills
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson
Adam Young

Opposed:

Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Linda Long-Bellil
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro

Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Linda Woodland

Abstained:
Megan Weeks

The motion failed 9-12-1

Motion: To amend the original motion by adding “be contingent on meeting the health metrics that are established by the Boards of Health and the Superintendent no later than December 21, 2020 and approved by the School Committee s.”

(M. Gustafson)
(L. Long-Bellil)

Motion: To extend the meeting until 10:30 PM

(B. Mitchel)
(K. Ottmar)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:
None

The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Weeks read aloud the amendment made by Member Gustafson and Member Long-Bellil, explaining the language would be added to the original motion on the floor: “be contingent on meeting the health metrics that are established by the boards of health and the superintendent no later than December 21, 2020 and approved by the School Committee.”

Roll call vote on amendment:

In favor:

Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Deidre Shapiro
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:

Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Sherrie Haber
Matthew Lavoie
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan

Abstained:

Megan Weeks

The motion passed 14-7-1.

Chair Weeks read aloud the main motion, as amended.

Motion: Return to school on January 4, 2021 for Phase 2 students, moderate needs and high needs students as defined by DESE, with Phase 3 students returning to school no more than 2 weeks later. The return to school shall be contingent on meeting the health metrics that are established by the Boards of Health and the Superintendent no later December 21, 2020 and approved by the School Committee.

(M. Gustafson)

(R. Imber)

Members were given the opportunity to make new comments. During discussion, Member Imber, who seconded the motion on the floor, suggested that he had improved language and Member Gustafson offered to withdraw the motion to allow the opportunity to restate it with improved language. The Chair clarified that no further amendment would be allowed even if the motion were withdrawn.

Roll call vote on motion as amended:

In favor:

Laura Kirshenbaum
Kenneth Mills
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Jeffrey Sullivan
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:

Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Kelly Williamson

Abstained:

Megan Weeks

The motion failed 8-13-1.

Chair Weeks thanked Mr. Gransewicz for his efforts and he was given a round of Applause.

Chair Weeks returned to the meeting agenda.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

1. Motion: Upon the recommendation of the Legal Affairs Subcommittee, the WRSDC accept the agreement between AA Transportation and the WRSD, as written.

Legal Affairs Subcommittee Chair Brown reported that additional information has been received and action by the full School Committee on a settlement agreement with AA Transportation of Shrewsbury will be tabled to a time uncertain.

2. To accept the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, Revised 12/1/2020
(K. Mills)
(B. Mitchel)

Diversity, Ethics, and Anti-racism Subcommittee Chair Silva and Director Keenan spoke to the motion, explaining the review and consideration of this plan.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:

None

The motion passed unanimously.

3. To support a Resolution – MCAS and High Stakes Testing

Before a motion was made, Chair Weeks read aloud the resolution. The floor was opened for discussion. Upon discussion and consideration, action by the School Committee to support this resolution will go to a subcommittee for review and a recommendation.

4. To support a Resolution – Reopening of Schools for In-Person Instruction

Before a motion was made, Chair Weeks read aloud the resolution. The floor was opened for discussion. Upon discussion and consideration, action by the School Committee to support this resolution will go to the Legal Affairs Subcommittee for review and a recommendation.

VI. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business brought before the School Committee.

VII. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on August 24, 2020

Deferred

B. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on September 14, 2020

Deferred

C. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on September 29, 2020

Deferred

D. Approval of #1353 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on October 13, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the WRSDC held on October 13, 2020.

(S. Brown)
(M. Lavoie)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett

Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:
None

Abstained:
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Jeffrey Sullivan

The motion passed 20-0-2.

- E. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on November 9, 2020

Deferred

- F. Approval of #1354 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on November 9, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the WRSDC held on November 9, 2020.

(S. Haber)
(K. Mills)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber

Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:
None

Abstained:
Benjamin Mitchel
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Jeffrey Sullivan

The motion passed 19-0-3.

G. Approval of the Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on November 17, 2020

Deferred

Motion: To extend the meeting until 11:00 PM

(M. Gustafson)
(K. Mills)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson

Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:

Scott Brown
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Benjamin Mitchel
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Asima Silva

The motion passed 16-6.

H. Approval of #327 Special Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on November 17, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of the special meeting of the WRSDC held on November 17, 2020.

(S. Haber)
(B. Mitchel)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Robert Imber

Michael Pantos, Jr.
Jeffrey Sullivan

The motion passed 19-0-3.

10:30 PM Member Mitchel left the meeting.

VIII. Treasurer's Report/Financial Statements

Chair Weeks reminded the Committee that if there were questions regarding the Director of Business and Finance'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.

IX. Committee Reports

- A. Management Subcommittee (M. Weeks, Chair, M. Dennis, Vice-chair, S. Brown, K. Mills, A. Silva, C. Smith, A. Young)

Chair Weeks reported this subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, December 15, 2020, at 6:30 PM, via Google Meet.

- B. Education Subcommittee (C. Smith, Chair, L. Long-Bellil, Vice-chair, K. Bennett, S. Haber, R. Imber, L. Kirshenbaum, D. Shapiro)

Subcommittee Chair Smith reported this subcommittee met on December 7, 2020 meeting and will meet next on January 11, 2021 at 6:00 PM, via Google Meet.

- C. Business/Finance Subcommittee (M. Dennis, Chair, K. Mills, Vice-chair, M. Gustafson, B. Mitchel, K. Ottmar)

At Subcommittee Chair Dennis' request due to his absence at the last Business/Finance Subcommittee meeting, Subcommittee Vice-chair Mills reported on the November 30, 2020 meeting of this subcommittee.

Motion: To approve the second reading of Amended Policy 4323.2 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Bidding Requirements**, waiving the reading.

(K. Mills)

(M. Gustafson)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson

Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Michael Pantos, Jr.
Jeffrey Sullivan

The motion passed 19-0-2.

- D. Legal Affairs Subcommittee (S. Brown, Chair, K. Ottmar, Vice-chair, R. Imber, K. Mills)

Subcommittee Chair Brown reported on meetings, negotiations, and the mediation scheduled in the weeks ahead.

- E. Superintendent Goals and Evaluation Subcommittee (K. Mills, Chair, L. Kirshenbaum, K. Williamson, L. Woodland)

Subcommittee Chair Mills reported on the December 2, 2020 meeting and provided a brief overview of the timeline for review of progress on the Superintendent's goals and the annual evaluation of the Superintendent timeline. For the new members, Subcommittee Chair Mills gave an overview of the goals and evaluations process. The subcommittee will meet next on March 7, 2021.

- F. Facilities and Security Subcommittee (A. Young, Chair, K. Bennett, M. Pantos, L. Woodland)

Facilities and Security Subcommittee Chair Young welcomed the two new members to the subcommittee, Member Bennett and Member Sullivan, and he reported the subcommittee will meet on December 16, 2020.

Motion: To approve the second reading of Amended Policy 6612.3 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services Face Coverings**, waiving the reading.

(A. Young)

(K. Mills)

For the benefit of the new members, Subcommittee Chair Young spoke about the policy and the amendments being made.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Michael Pantos, Jr.

The motion passed 20-0-1.

Member Lavoie had his hand raised and had a question for the Superintendent Goals and Evaluation Subcommittee, which was allowed. Member Lavoie asked Subcommittee Chair Mills about the 360° evaluation and the next scheduled date of the subcommittee, March 7, 2021. Member Haber agreed with Member Lavoie and the need for additional information and input when addressing the Superintendent's annual evaluation.

G. Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism Subcommittee (A. Silva, Chair, L. Woodland, Vice-chair, M. Ayala, K. Bennett, S. Brown, M. Gustafson, J. Haynes, L. Kirshenbaum, L. Long-Bellil)

Subcommittee Chair Silva reported on the November 30, 2020 meeting of this subcommittee, and that the subcommittee will meet next on January 7, 2021 at 7:00 PM, via Google Meet.

Motion: To approve the second reading of Amended Policy 6436 **Policy Relating to Pupil Services Appreciation of Diversity**, waiving the reading.

(A. Silva)

(A. Young)

Member Haber noted the incorrect policy number was listed on the meeting agenda.

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Michael Pantos, Jr.

The motion passed 20-0-1.

H. Audit Advisory Board (B. Mitchel, Chair, A. Young, Vice-chair)

Vice-chair Young reported the AAB has not met since the last School Committee.

I. Ad Hoc Subcommittees

J. Building Committees

K. School Council Reports:

Central Tree Middle School (M. Lavoie), Chocksett Middle School (K. Williamson), Davis Hill Elementary School (K. Williamson), Dawson Elementary School (L. Kirshenbaum), Glenwood Elementary School (N. Amos), Houghton Elementary School (D. Shapiro), Mayo Elementary School (A. Young), Mountview Middle School (S. Brown), Naquag Elementary School (S. Haber), Paxton Center School (K. Ottmar), Thomas Prince School (A. Silva), Wachusett Regional High School (K. Mills), Early Childhood Center (L. Woodland), Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC) (M. Gustafson)

Member Mills – WRHS met on December 8, 2020

Member Haber – Naquag Elementary School

Member Woodland – Early Childhood Center

Member Shapiro – Houghton Elementary School

Member Kirshenbaum – Dawson Elementary School

X. Public Hearing

Member Weeks read a comment submitted electronically.

Deanna Yahres, Holden resident (attachment 1)

XI. New Business

- Motion: To support the WRSD Covid-19 Community Volunteer Task Force of licensed medical personnel to work with the existing COVID re-opening task force on focused efforts including, but not limited to: 1) contact tracing with the local board of health resources and/or assisting the District as overflow resources; 2) supporting school nursing staff as substitutes or as administration sees the need; and 3) support existing and ongoing efforts in conjunction with the re-opening task force.

Addressed earlier in the meeting.

- Reopening WRSD for hybrid learning for grades K – 2 no later than December 14, 2020

Addressed earlier in the meeting.

Motion: To extend the meeting until 11:30 PM

(K. Mills)

(L. Long-Bellil)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:

Michael Dennis
Scott Brown
Matthew Lavoie
Michael Pantos, Jr.

The motion passed 17-4.

11:04 PM Member Brown left the meeting.

- Public comment process by WRSDC and the use/purpose of questions@wrsd.net

Chair Weeks invited Member Lavoie to speak to this item, which he asked be on the agenda. Member Lavoie's concern is that members of the public who submit their comments/emails to questions@wrsd.net might assume that their emails are available to all members of the School Committee, which might not be the case. Chair Weeks explained that in most instances these comments are submitted the day of a regular School Committee meeting. Member Kirshenbaum suggested that members of the public who submit comments/emails be asked to include their address for transparency. Other members voiced they too shared Member Lavoie's concern. Chair Weeks will speak with District administration about how to inform the public the intent and use of questions@wrsd.net. Supervisor of Information Technology explained via chat an auto-reply can be added to questions@wrsd.net. Member Lavoie suggested use of Google Form for public comment.

- Use of straw polls by WRSDC

At Chair Weeks' request, Member Lavoie spoke about the recent use of "straw polls" and how the results of these straw polls are shared.

Member Mills requested that a meeting be scheduled for December 21, 2020 to meet and discuss metrics for reopening on January 19, 2021.

Vice-chair Dennis requested training be scheduled for the School Committee on parliamentary procedure. Vice-chair Dennis also requested that a small task force be formed to investigate the concerns alleged in the teachers' Statement of No Confidence in the Superintendent with a recommendation on a pathway forward.

Member Woodland raised her concern about the current school calendar, which lists Wednesdays as half days of school, and her opinion that the full Committee needs to vote on amending the calendar. Chair Weeks explained that since a vote to amend the school calendar was not included on the meeting agenda, action by the Committee cannot be taken at this meeting. Member Gustafson questioned Chair Weeks' explanation.

Motion: To overrule the Chair that action by the School Committee cannot be taken at this meeting on items that are not included on the posted meeting agenda for the December 7, 2020 Special Meeting.

(M. Gustafson)
(M. Lavoie)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Michael Dennis
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Matthew Lavoie
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Jeffrey Sullivan

Opposed:

Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Robert Imber
Kenneth Mills
Karl Ottmar
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Abstained:

Megan Weeks
Laura Kirshenbaum
Linda Long-Bellil

The motion failed 6-11-3.

Member Long-Bellil asked that the settlement agreement with AA Transportation be included on the upcoming special meeting agenda.

Member Kirshenbaum asked that the results of the parent survey be included on a future agenda.

Member Haber requested information and an explanation about the inconsistencies in elementary and middle schools schedules

Member Bennett expressed her concern about not having 6' between desks.

Member Mills spoke about the deadline for the District to provide to the state the District's Student Opportunity Act submission, which is now due January 18, 2021, without extension.

Member Lavoie asked that real data on student achievement be including on a future meeting agenda.

Chair Weeks asked members who have additional requests to email them to her, and she will share with the Superintendent.

XII. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(R. Imber)
(L. Kirshenbaum)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Michael Dennis
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Kenneth Mills

Karl Ottmar
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Deidre Shapiro
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:
None

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Darryll McCall, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

DM:rlp

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Public comment from Holden resident Deanna Yahres



Rebecca Petersen <rebecca_petersen@wrsd.net>

Fwd: Public Comment from ECC

1 message

Megan Weeks <megan_weeks@wrsd.net>

Wed, Dec 9, 2020 at 11:00 PM

To: Rebecca Petersen <rebecca_petersen@wrsd.net>

Megan K Weeks, M.Ed
Chair WRSD School Committee
Interim Principal, Murdock High School

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Deanna.yahres** <deanna.yahres@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Dec 9, 2020 at 3:53 PM
Subject: Public Comment from ECC
To: <megan_weeks@wrsd.net>

hello Chair Weeks

(I can not find email for public comment so send to you)

As staff a member who has been in the building with students since October 5th, myself and my colleagues have many concerns. We feel our voices are not being heard. What is the metric for our district to move to remote only? 4/5 towns are currently red with the 5th being yellow. Holden our town with the highest number of students is red! Why are we not moving to a remote only model for a few weeks. Cases are rising in every building with students. There is another positive case at Naquag just today (12/7/20).

We are exhausted physically and emotionally. Everyday we put on a brave face with our students who do not consistently wear masks. Do not have the language to tell us when they do not feel well.

Why has this become a political issue "getting kids back into school"? Why is it not a health and safety issue. We are disappointed with the committee members that disregard the data and recommendations of the health representatives from our towns. We are disappointed in the lack decisive leadership.

I implore the committee to think of the health and safety of our community especially the staff and students who have been in-person since october 5th. The higher the rate of infections in our towns the more it impacts staff and student's in person.

Thank you for attention.

I have received approval from my colleagues to sign from ECC ABA staff

Deanna Yahres
187 Mason Rd

The contents of this e-mail, and any attachments, are the property of the Wachusett Regional School District, and subject to the Public Records Law, M.G.L. c.66, § 10.