

**MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2004
7:00 P.M. -OPEN SESSION
WACTC-ROOM 303
MULTI-MEDIA ROOM**

Call to Order at 7:00 P.M.

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Marc Dubois-Chairman	Present
Michael Bileau-Vice Chairman	Present
Allen Auclair	Present
John Ward	Absent
Michelle Williams	Present

GOOD AND WELFARE-PUBLIC:

Mr. David Druniack, representing Albert's Music, 526 Front Street, Woonsocket, came to speak about the musical-instrument bid. They did bid two years ago and did not this time in protest. He thought he would come before the School Committee to make his case. He stated that the terms and condition dictated on the bid are almost impossible to meet most of them. Only certain makes and models of instruments are noted as acceptable, some of which he doesn't carry and only one store he knows of does. The bid states that the instrument must be brand new and the parents must buy new when they could sell a reconditioned instrument at a much better price. Then, it states if a student decides to purchase the instrument, they must guaranty a 40% discount off the balance. He feels this is price fixing. He doesn't mind if it states a discount but not the percentage. Also, all repairs must be done on site at the store and returned in five days. If the work is completed in six days, they could loose the bid. They don't employ a full-time repairman on site. If there is only one source for renting instruments, then people will pay a higher price. There must be competition. Also, the bid states that a credit card is needed to guaranty the rental. Most folks in the area don't own a credit card. Also, he has heard that school teachers are selling reeds, lubricants and other items in their classrooms. Under the General Laws of R.I., it prohibits the sale of commercial goods to students and this money is either going to the teachers or back to the schools. This income is not declared. He has called the Department of Taxation to look into this. Also, teachers are tutoring/private lessons to students at their homes. R.I. Law states that a teacher cannot teach/tutor if that student is under their care. They can teach someone from another District but not their own students. Their needs to be a competitive force in Woonsocket where there are eight companies available and Woonsocket is the only District that does this with the bid.

Mr. John McLaughlin, 632 South Main Street, Woonsocket, who is with the Physical Education Department at the Middle School, claims he spoke to Mr. McGee about the parking situation at that school. Cars are parked on the sidewalks sometimes three deep and children run around and in between these cars. He is asking that the Safety Committee look into this matter. Mr. McGee did speak about it at the faculty meeting and the fire lanes have been cleared but a few cars are still blocking. When drivers pull out of driveway, they don't look to the right when they see parked cars and children could be running in between the cars and can't be seen. He has called the Police Department and will speak with the head of the Traffic Department tomorrow. Also, there are four-foot holes filled with rubble where the buses come in and can't understand why these haven't been taken care of. This is City property. Maybe there is a problem with the funding. Also, they were told eight years ago that the parking lot at the school would not be used for parking but it has and so has the other one. This deprives the kids from going outside when the weather is

nice. Also, the Girls' locker room is a place where they must dress in a wide-open room. Upstairs there is a shower room with stalls and with a little fixing; the girls could change up there.

Ms. Lynn DeSchepper, 137 Capwell Avenue, Woonsocket, came to speak about the School-nurse situation. There has been no issue about her filling in, in the past. Then, she received a call from the Special-Ed department stating they were given orders that she could no longer sub in the schools. She was given no reason. This is a loss of income to her and her family. She sent an email to Dr. D'Acchioli and has not heard back. The nepotism clause was research by the Department's attorney and it stated that due to her unusual circumstances as a sub-contractor for two years and before Marc was elected to the Committee, that he considers her eligible. She has put in her time and has been flexible. Now, her name is off the agenda and she would like the Committee members to voice their opinions and come to some conclusion on this issue. Dr. D'Acchioli stated he did not receive an email and he will talk to Mr. Emerson about the subbing issue.

Ms. Ewing, 24 Second Avenue, stated that last year, her ten-year-old son was bussed from Coleman to Harris with her youngest son, Clyde, who is a diabetic. Her older son is now at the Middle School. The buses are equipped to do CPR and basic first aid but can't save a diabetic if in a diabetic coma. He was allowed to fall asleep and when she got him off the bus, his level was 34. The ADA states it is mandated that there must be someone on the bus to deal with a diabetic. She has to keep asking for this. Dr. D'Acchioli stated that this is the first time hearing of this and it is required per Mr. Legare that the request is made each year. He will speak with him tomorrow.

Mr. Richard DiPardo, 134 Huntington Avenue, Woonsocket, stated that the team leaders were laid off a week and a half before school started and were not given proper notice and some had all ready done some work. There are 1610 students at the Middle School and only four administrators at the school. There is no one there to deal with the staff moment to moment when there is a crisis or a parent comes in. The monitors only work part of the time. These leaders were a great bargain. He asks that they review their budget and find a few dollars to reinstate them. It is the best money spent.

Ms. Rose Trudeau, 1144 Mendon Road, is the nurse at Leo Savoie and she stated it is not easy finding subs for nurses. They try and cover for one another but there is not a lot to go around. It is very hard to find a sub and Ms. DeSchepper has received glowing remarks from the teachers. She deserves the job.

Ms. Brenda Fowler of Woonsocket stated her son has been bounced from school to school before school even started. She doesn't want him at Citizens and was told he would go to Savoie. Then, she was told that the Superintendent changed his mind and would now go to Pothier. She was, called again, and told he would be moved to Citizens. That school is failing and when she spoke with Mrs. Natale, she stated it is only the Spanish kids that are failing. Her two kids are Spanish. She was insulted by this comment. She met with the Deputy Superintendent and she stated that she was a friend with Mrs. Natale and that she is not a racist. She feels you can't categorize a group of students. She won't meet with Mrs. Natale and wants her son to finish the second grade there and then be moved out. She hopes her son can stay at Pothier. Dr. D'Acchioli will be meeting with all the elementary school principals Friday. Her son will stay in his room at Pothier. Mrs. Natale is a strong advocate for Spanish students and he had a hard time believing it as anyone who knows her would.

Ms. Marlene Smith, 15 Monica Drive, feels that there are conferences and travel allowances that can be eliminated as well as other unnecessary items which could pay for the team leaders. She is an advocate for these positions. There was an article that listed sixty positions when, in fact, it is sixteen. She believes the dollar amount is around 32K and she believes they can find this money for this crucial position. This is the largest middle school in New England. They do an outstanding job.

Ms. Theresa Doire, a North Smithfield school nurse, stated she has eight pages of problems and instead of giving one copy to the team leader; she now has to get one to every teacher in the school. Paper costs a lot of money.

Ms. Anita Forcier, 95 Mary Lane, stated that bullying rules were reviewed with students and hopes all

teachers' cover this issue with their classes. She went to Cape Cod for two days for a seminar on bullying. At least fifty percent of the teachers have to participate for it to succeed. She passed out a package that offered ideas, policies, two Internet sites and much more. (SEE ATTACHMENT 1) Items can be purchased through the Safe School grant money. She thanked Chairman Dubois for running the Safety Committee.

RECOGNITIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dr. D'Acchioli congratulated and thanked Mr. Parrillo and the custodial and facilities staff for having their buildings in great shape for the start of this school year. He, also, thanked all of the district's secretarial and clerical staff, as well as the district's entire Administrative team for their preparations ensuring a smooth start.

He commended the following WMS staff for their outstanding efforts with the 6th grade orientation on August 24th: Chris Williamson (Special Education teacher and student council advisor), Pauline Papino (Consumer Science teacher), Sandy Gasbarro (ESL teacher and SIT chairperson). He thanked all for a job well done.

Motion to receive and place of file said report
Unanimously approved

MB Second: MW

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the open minutes of August 18 and August 25, 2004 as submitted
MB Second: MW
Unanimously approved

CONSENT AGENDA:

Personnel Actions: (See Attached)
Certified Appointments
Non-Certified Appointments

Nurse-teacher Tabled

Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Local

Pitney Bowes-McFee-Lease Agreement-Postal Meter-\$3,336.00
XEROX Corp-WMS-Copier Leases & Usage-\$9,240.00

Lunch Revenue

Liberty Electric-WHS-High School Kitchen Upgrades-\$5,373.00

Grant

Connecting for Children & Families-District-21st Century/COZI-\$245,244.00
Dell Computer Corp-WHS-Computer/Prime Time Grant-\$6,435.04
NASCO Math-WMS-Educational Supplies-Prime Time Grant-\$5,062.34
Northern RI Collaborative-Special Ed-Wilson Training-\$2,202.00
Staples-WMS-Educational Supplies-Prime Time Grant-\$2,169.05

Field Trips/Conference Requests (0)

Home Schooling Requests: (6)

Motion to remove the Nurse-Teacher position from the Consent Agenda
Unanimously approved

MW Second: AA

Motion to approve all the other Personnel Actions
Unanimously approved

AA Second: MB

Mr. Bileau asked if some of these folks are working for them before they are approved, what is the District's liability if they should get hurt? Dr. D'Acchioli stated they are considered a volunteer and that their insurance does cover them.

Motion to table the Nurse-Teacher position
Unanimously approved

MW Second: AA

Motion to approve all Purchases/Transfers over \$2,000
Unanimously approved

MB Second: AA

Motion to approve the six Home Schooling Requests
Unanimously approved

MD Second: AA

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Bileau stated that the cockroach problem at the Middle School has been taken care of and the bathrooms and the basement ceiling will be complete over the next couple of weeks.

CONFERENCES: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Dubois stated he had a few questions about the musical instrument bid. It appears that the bid is tailor-made. Half of the Woonsocket parents do not have a credit card and why are they only dealing with one company?

Mr. Colin Kane, Band Director at the Middle School, explained that for several years, they had three companies they dealt with and there was a problem with inconsistency of instrument quality. Also, students were without their instruments for long periods of time due to repairs. So, he spoke with the Band Director and they produced a list of specific instruments that were good and relied upon. Mr. Ethier and himself submitted it to the Business Office and the bid went out.

Mr. Ethier, the Band Leader at the High School, that this was an effort to secure the best situation for the students. They sent the rental contract out for bid. Many Districts put it out to bid with similar stipulations. A student may have a problem due to the quality of an instrument or if it is not returned in a timely manner from a repair. They are trying to minimize problems, which is very important to the success of their students.

Ms. Williams stated that the bid requires all instruments to be new but Rick's Musical Instruments lists new and used. Why is that if new instruments are required? What happens if Rick's is on vacation when repairs are needed?

Mr. Ethier explained that is a standard form. New is what is recommended but students could use any instrument.

The owner of Rick's Musical Instruments was in the audience and stood to explain that they only take a week of vacation at a time and they hired someone last December for a full-time position that can repair instruments and is available even during vacation periods. This man has repaired instruments for over

twenty years.

Ms. Williams stated that this is a poor community and is concerned about the credit card requirement. She has received a call from a parent about this issue and this parent was told by the store that they must have a credit card.

The owner stated that is their general policy and that is what the employees quote but he has waived that for parents and will waive that requirement in some situations. Also, parents can go elsewhere.

Mr. Auclair stated that this costs the Education Department no money and wanted to be sure that parents and students are aware that they can go to alternative sources for instruments or bring in a used one say from a relative if it is available.

Mr. Ethier stated parents and students are made aware of that and there are even some free instruments available at the schools. They are not new and not all instruments are available. But if a student comes in with his uncle's saxophone, that is fine. Since they have been using the bid process, their numbers of students participating is bigger and they are holding more students. This is due to the lack of a negative experience due to poor instrument quality. The bid gives other stores the chance to bid, parents know the costs and they get the best value. Many students seek alternative sources.

Dr. D'Acchioli stated it is a benchmark and a suggested list. No money is received from Rick's or from parents.

Chairman Dubois applauded the Music Department for their work but has a problem with using just one vendor. He feels the choice should be left up to the parent. Mr. Ethier stated they could go to other sources as long as the instrument is not detrimental which will not give the student the best chance for success.

Motion to table the Musical Instrument Rental bid
Unanimously approved

MD Second: MW,AA

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. D'Acchioli stated that prior to the official start of this school year, the Middle School (August 24), High School (August 25 + 26) and the W.A.C.T.C. (August 25) conducted orientation sessions for new students. The new annual New Teacher Orientation was held at the Harris School on August 26th. And, that same evening, Mrs. Rabidoux, also, hosted a district-wide Kindergarten Orientation at the Globe Park School. On Friday, August 27th, the secondary schools Administrative teams met with the City police to review policies and procedures. He met with parents from Coleman and Citizens on August 25th to explain School Choice options. As of this afternoon, four students from Coleman and thirty-one students from Citizens took advantage of the transfer option.

Teacher orientation was held on Monday, August 30th. The event went well. The staff was apprised of district goals and initiatives, and their professional development plans were presented in detail. They reviewed their most recent accomplishments and conversed with the Deputy Commissioner Todd Flaherty via teleconferencing.

The Facilities Department had another busy summer. The structural issues at Citizens have been addressed. The hot water heat exchanger at the high school has, also, been successfully replaced. The Pothier roof was repaired in-house and is holding up well. Harris received new fencing. The drainpipe at the Middle School has been repaired. The cockroach problem at the Middle School has also been successfully eradicated this past weekend. The girls' bathrooms at the Middle School await the arrival and installation of the partitions. Half of the intercom system at the Middle School went down last week. They are researching options to repair the system. Fire code upgrades at Social Street and the Fairmount schools are almost ready to bid. New water meters are being replaced throughout the district. And last, the architect is moving forward with plans to bid the installation of an elevator at McFee.

Schools opened quite smoothly this year. Dr. D'Acchioli had the opportunity to visit every school last week and meet with the principals and some staff. All reported that this was one of the best openings they have had. The focus on assertive discipline and management of student behavior, also, appears to have had a dramatic effect on school operations. They have had some problems, as they always do, with student transportation, however, those issues reported are being addressed by Valley Transportation.

As expected, enrollments varied each day. Today's enrollments are as follows: They have 3,143 elementary students enrolled, 211 less than enrollments reported last October 1. This number was predicted as a result of the change in the kindergarten entrance date being moved from December 31 to September 1st. As of this date, it does not look like they will be able to accept any exceptions to the new age requirements. In fact, an influx of kindergarteners prompted the creation of a new integrated kindergarten class at Bernon. Even with this additional class, class sizes will be approaching maximum contractual limits and they will still need to assign some students outside of their neighborhood schools.

The Middle School remains relatively stable with 1,609, down fourteen students from last year.

The High School has 2,071 students on its rolls, representing an increase of eighty-seven students from last October 1. However, seventy-nine of those students on the rolls have never reported to school. Once the no-show students are purged from the system, the numbers should fall below 2,000.

This Friday, elementary principals will meet with Mr. Legare and himself to balance enrollments and adjust class sizes to within contractual limits. It appears that they may need to add a new class at Harris and possibly one at Bernon. These decisions become quite difficult in tough fiscal times. And he will remind the audience that they are still in fiscal crisis. Cuts had to be made to get to a balanced budget. They are adding staff simply to meet contractual requirements. Unfortunately, they have not reached a point where dollars can be added and items that were cut can be restored.

On a good note, their storm troopers, the girls field hockey team, are safely back from Florida having survived hurricane Frances. Ironically, their first game today was postponed due to wet weather.

They did receive a report of a Coleman student who had contracted viral meningitis. Dr. D'Acchioli has been in contact with their school doctor. Viral meningitis is common but rarely serious and can be successfully treated, unlike the bacterial meningitis, which prompted a citywide inoculation program in 1996. All principals have been asked to have their school nurses educate their students on proper hygiene. All in all, it looks like they will have started a great year.

Motion to receive and place on file said Superintendent's Report
Unanimously approved

MB Second: MD

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD AND WELFARE:

Mr. Bileau thanked everyone who came to the meeting and those that spoke and if those folks don't receive an answer on their questions, then please call one of the Committee members. He thanked Mr. Parrillo at the Middle School. He will try and attend all the open houses for all the schools or as many as he can and urged parents to go and meet the teachers and Administrators at their student's school. Kudos to Social and Pothier who went above and beyond but is disappointed with Citizens.

Chairman Dubois advised parents to read their child's handbooks before signing them. That way if a discipline problem arises, the parent can't state they didn't know of the policies. Mr. Legare answered an email about a third grader who wanted to ride on the bus from his grandmother's house where he is watched rather than his own home and was glad to see he accommodated the child. Mr. Legare they will do that as long as there is room on the bus and is eligible for bus transportation from his home address. The Safety Committee will be meeting in the next three weeks and he will be sure to get emails out about it. He spoke to Mr. Richards at WOON radio station and he was told they would like to have a Committee

member participate on the radio at 8:45 in the morning the day after their meetings. The invitation stands. He asked Dr. D'Acchioli to check and see if the Music department is selling reeds to students. Also, he asked him to look into the fact that some students at the High School don't have lockers and have to carry their belongings all day.

Ms. Williams explained to Dr. D'Acchioli that she received a call from a parent who said they walked by the In-School room at the middle School and was told they serve peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch still and to please check on it. She visited the Middle School on Thursday and stated it made no sense that a teacher had a long line of girls in the hallway for bathroom time. This was at one o'clock. When she returned at 1:25, three students were still waiting. This is taking a half hour of instruction away from these students. Students shouldn't have bathroom duty. There need to find a better way. She asked are all the assistant principals at the Middle School making the same level of pay. She was told that Dr. Frisk who has served as an elementary teacher and principal makes \$7,109 less than the others, and that she was politely invited out of the school system and told there was a job opportunity in North Smithfield and that Dr. D'Acchioli would give her a good recommendation. Dr. Frisk has received many letters from teachers and others, has a Masters degree, a Doctorate degree, is a team worker and is innovative. She is the kind of people they need. The budget was approved for these salaries and yet she is earning \$7,109 less and wants to know where that money is going and why she isn't being paid that additional amount. Also, at the Middle School, she looked at the ice cream machines in the cafeteria and they have Mega Warheads, Nestle Very Vanilla that contains 32 grams of sugar and 31 carbs. She asked Mrs. Goodman to check and see who owns those machines and she is working on having the soda and ice cream machines removed and replaced with juice and nutritional foods. Other Districts have done it and they have not lost money. The child will buy the juice if that is what is available. They need to send the right message to the students.

Mr. Auclair thanked the parents and teachers who advocate for the students. He requested an executive session with administrators from Citizens and Coleman and why they are failing under the NCLB act and wants to discuss what their plan is this year to succeed. He wants the same with the Middle School. He has been told that the testing next time will be more stringent. They need to get together and have a plan. He wants to start with those three first. Also, over the next couple of months, he would like a workshop to review AYP and have it taped so it can be played on cable. The Middle School science classes have no sinks, which stops some chemistry projects. They should at least look into that. Also, one of the standards listed on the website about Science is that microscopes are needed and students should have access to one. He stated that some of the Open Houses were held at 8:45 in the morning at Coleman, Second, Fifth and Social. Perhaps working parents can't attend at that time. Dr. D'Acchioli stated that when those schools held them in the evening, no one showed up. The morning meeting had a great turn out. It works in the morning for those schools have heard nothing negative about it. Mr. Auclair stated he heard from a parent that there was a fundraiser at Coleman where they have no PTO. Dr. D'Acchioli stated he thought there was a joint PTO. Mr. Auclair spoke to Jackie Asquizzi at the D.O.E. and he received a copy of the rules and regulations regarding school health programs. He gave each member a copy of the eight-page report. They should be in compliance. She explained that they never have been sited because the D.O.H. and D.O.E. have been very slack and have let things slide. However, by next August, the High School has to ensure chemical safety and ensure that certain chemicals are not in their inventory. He prefers to be in compliance rather than wait for the D.O.H. to come in response to a complaint. He urged the members to look through the handout. The next Parent Advisory meeting will be on October 20th at 7:00 at the WACTC.

Motion to adjourn at 8:45 P.M.

MB Second: AA

Unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,

Denise St Germain
WSC Recording Secretary