

**MINUTES  
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2005  
7:00 P.M. -OPEN SESSION  
WACTC-ROOM 303  
MULTI-MEDIA ROOM**

**Call to Order at 8:10 P.M.**

**Moment of Silence**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call:**

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

Chairman Dubois explained that Ms. Williams was home ill with the flu and that the Committee was just in a Closed Session with Attorney Richard Ackerman and they will continue the service of Attorneys Max Wistow at \$400/hour and Attorney Jerry Visconti at \$325/hour to guide them in the Promac matter. The grievance filed by the Facilities Union is continued until the February 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

**GOOD AND WELFARE-PUBLIC:** None

**RECOGNITIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Dr. D'Acchioli congratulated the following students for being selected to the RI All State Teams for their outstanding performances. Joshua L'Etoile, Peter Gauthier, & Anthony Marsella – All State Football, Gina DeLuca & Hillary Roberts – All State Field Hockey, and Alysha Castonguay & James Lemire – All State Cheerleading Team. Anthony Marsella has, also, been nominated for the Old Spice Red Zone Player of the Year.

Congratulations went to Samantha Drury Gr. 5, Globe Park for being named the winner of the district- wide spelling bee and Kelsey Brien, Gr. 5 Kevin Coleman for being named runner-up. There were seventeen contestants from grades 4 through 8 who participated. Samantha was the winner with the correct spelling of the word “anthology”.

Kudos were extended to Robyn Cafley for organizing a Hop-A-Thon at Globe Park for kindergarten through second grade students. Students raised \$1755.03 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

**Motion to receive and place of file**

**JW Second: AA**

Unanimously approved

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Motion to approve the Closed Minutes of January 5, 2005 and the Open and Closed Minutes of January 12, 2005**

**JW Second: MB**

**Motion to strike the line on page 4, Section 7, of the January 12<sup>th</sup> Open Minutes, that reads ‘Mr. Ward would not support...individuals as taxpayers,’ he said.’ be stricken because he never said that**

**JW Second: MB**

Unanimously approved

Mr. Auclair stated that under Committees on page 2, there are three members listed under Legislative and none for the Sick Bank. Mr. Ward stated that he is not on the Legislative Committee and wants his name removed.

**Motion to remove Mr. Ward’s name from the Legislative Committee listed AA Second: JW**

Unanimously approved

Chairman Dubois stated he would resolve the Sick Bank appointment.

**The Committee unanimously approved the original motion.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Personnel Actions:** (See Attached)

Certified Appointments

Non-Certified Appointments

**Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000**

**Local**

NRI Chamber Foundation./Jobs for Graduates/WHS/Local-\$15,000.00

Rizzo Ford/ New Transmission/Facilities/Local-\$3,290.00

Worthington Direct/Supplies/Harris/Local-\$4,528.20

**Grant**

Audio Concepts/Audio Visual Equip/Mt. St. Charles/Grant-\$3,809.05

The Autism Project of RI/Workshop/Sp.Ed./Grant-\$3,500.00

Long’s Electronics/Video Projector/Mons. Gadoury/Grant-\$2,410.24

**Revenue**

Kitchen Exhaust/Cleaning Exhaust System/District/Lunch Revenue-\$2,240.00

**Field Trips/Conference Requests**

National Science Teacher’s Convention/WHS/Dallas, TX/Article 18

**Disposal of Obsolete Equipment**

**Home Schooling Requests:** (0)

Mr. Auclair asked that the following items be removed for discussion: under Personnel Items Non/Certified, the Parent/Comm. Engagement Coordinator; the Rizzo Ford item under Purchases; the field trip and the disposal of obsolete equipment.

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda except for the items removed for discussion**

**JW Second: MB/AA**

Unanimously approved

Regarding the role of the Parent/Comm. Engagement Coordinator, Ms. Kristine Allen, Coordinator for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, was in attendance and explained that this position is being funded by 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Ms. Tilano will work at the middle School to improve relations between the parents, teachers, etc. and work with the whole school organization. Ms. Tilano has worked many years in this District, is bi-lingual and has functioned in this role before. It is not a complaint line.

**Motion to approve the Parent/Comm. Engagement Coordinator position** JW Second: AA  
Unanimously approved

Dr. D'Acchioli explained that the Rizzo Ford purchase is for a new transmission on a '99 Ford F-250 truck and read from a letter from Mr. Fontaine explaining that this vehicle has over 50K miles, is used seven days a week including weekends for security and is used for snowplowing, as well. Per Rizzo Ford, the transmission needs to be replaced due to normal wear and tear.

**Motion to approve the Rizzo Ford purchase** AA Second: JW  
Unanimously approved

Mr. Auclair stated that regarding the field-trip request, there were two requests, one funded thru Article 18 and the other thru Title II. Which is correct? Dr. D'Acchioli stated that the request is funded thru Article 18 that the one that stated Title II was a draft.

**Motion to approve the Field-Trip Request** AA Second: JW  
Unanimously approved

Mr. Auclair asked about the obsolete equipment and what happens to it. Dr. D'Acchioli stated that they go out to bid by advertising and having an auction where sealed bids are received for the obsolete equipment. The items not sold, if usable, are donated and the items that is not usable, is discarded. Computers need to be disposed of at a special location. There is no charge for that. They do this several times a year with obsolete equipment.

**Motion to approve the disposal of Obsolete Equipment** AA Second: MD  
Unanimously approved

**COMMUNICATIONS:** None

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Chairman Dubois reminded everyone that there will be a Safety-Committee meeting next Wednesday at this location at 7:00 P.M. and asked Dr. D'Acchioli to notify the staff of the meeting.

**CONFERENCES:** None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Motion to approve Bid Award #05-05 to Life Safety Systems, the lowest responsible bidder, and with the recommendation of the Superintendent in the amount of \$188,900.00** JW Second: MB

Unanimously approved

Per Dr. D'Acchioli, this is for work to be done on fire alarms, which will concentrate on the Fairmount schools at this time and will be ultimately done in all the schools.

Chairman Dubois stated that he was affiliated with the Woonsocket Boys & Girls' Club years ago as an employee for a few months and after checking with Mr. Ackerman, he is not in conflict because he wasn't on a board and only worked there for a few weeks.

Mr. Grabowski, CEO of the Woonsocket Boys & Girls Club addressed the Committee. It was suggested to him by Mr. Legare of Valley Transportation to speak with Dr. Macera about possible bus transportation thru the school department because all buses used for private contracts were filled. They offer a quality after-school program and the new facility on Kendrick Avenue will be opening very soon. They would pay the School Department \$3 per student and they would be students from all the elementary schools only.

This would not change the bus route and the parents would pick the student up at the end of the program. This would include students who are not eligible for bussing now. This would generate more income to the School Department and the program would enhance the students' school activity. He stated he spoke with Mr. Legare about two weeks ago and he sent a letter to Dr. Macera and did not meet with her directly.

Mr. Ward explained that their policy prohibits this and Mr. Legare may suggest this but all other community organizations provide their own transportation. This would open the floodgates, plus provide for kids not eligible for bussing now and opens them up to liability. He understands that the bussing was started and then stopped. He wants to know why the policy was ignored.

Dr. D'Acchioli explained that he has sent emails to Mr. Legare for clarification and he stated that the bussing was started without his knowledge while he was away and that Mr. Grabowski had told them he had Dr. Macera's o.k. to do this. He told Mr. Legare that he needed a detailed packet first and the School Committee must approve such an item.

Mr. Ward explained that Dr. Macera did not have the authority to do this without the Committee's approval and without talking to the owner of their transportation provider. The Committee would need to see the numbers on the cost, analysis, etc. and he is disturbed about the work around without Dr. D'Acchioli being informed and this has never happened before. It's a basic question of trust. He would need the answers to a lot of questions before he could consider this. Also, now the School Department would be responsible for these students until they reach the Club. Now, once they get on a bus supplied by a community provider, they are the ones responsible once the student gets on the bus.

Mrs. Goodman, the Business Manager, stated she was under the impression that Dr. Macera was going to call Valley Transportation and Mr. Grabowski and that this was not a done deal.

Mr. Bileau asked how the money is collected and how would they handle discrepancies such as the School Department show twenty kids were to be going to the Club and the Club shows only five in attendance and that is all the pay the School Department for?

Mr. Grabowski stated they take attendance everyday and each bus driver has a list of the students and they could, also, mark who was in attendance so they would both have an accurate number.

Dr. D'Acchioli stated a written proposal is needed so that it can be negotiated by Dr. Macera and bring it before the Committee. It would still need approval and an amendment to the policy.

Chairman Dubois stated he saw no harm in tabling this item until the next meeting a written proposal can be submitted by Dr. Macera and Mr. Legare. He is not opposed to it.

**Motion to table the approval of Bus Transportation for Woonsocket Boys' and Girls' Club until the next meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup>**

**MD Second: AA**

Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

Dr. D'Acchioli explained that each year, they provide the Public with a copy of the proposed, first draft budget to the Public for suggestions, etc. The FY06 School Budget of \$62,050,715 represents a dollar increase of \$3,876,544 or 6.66%.

The increase in our budget is caused primarily from factors beyond the district's control. Perhaps the most significant increase is a result of changes imposed by the State Retirement Board. The ERSRI increased our contribution from 8.72% to 11.84%. This translates into almost 30% of our total increase – a dollar amount of \$1,087,755.

A 10% increase (\$562,729) was budgeted for Blue Cross. This estimate may be on the low side. The budget shows an 8.04% increase, which reflects, anticipated changes in staffing.

Workers' Compensation insurance increased almost 40% (\$92,000).

A 3% negotiated teacher salary increase actually translates into a 6% increase when steps are taken into account. The initial 6% increase has been reduced through anticipated retirements and a reduction on 8 teacher positions. Four positions were made at the elementary level, and one Middle School team has been eliminated. These changes were based solely on enrollment projections. There is little room in the budget for enrollment deviations. The adjusted dollar increase for salaries with the reductions already made requires an additional \$1,423,090 or 3.97% increase.

Regarding programs, the WACTC Auto body program has been dropped for lack of enrollment. A High School Family and Consumer Science class will be converting to a full WACTC Culinary program. And, the much-awaited Air Force JROTC program will be added to our offerings. No other program changes are reflected in this budget.

Based on current year spending, they budgeted an increase for special education out-of-district placements (\$418,808 – almost 15%). Urban Cities universally have a much higher percentage of special needs students.

This budget is based on an increase in anticipated revenue. Locally, WACTC tuitions revenues have been doubled based on current year enrollments at the WACTC (\$350,000 – 100% - doubled). The remaining revenue increases must come from the City and State.

To balance this budget at this point in time, they are relying on an additional \$2,195,681 (5%) increase in State funding and a \$1,311,765 (11.42%) increase from the City.

The Committee and the Public needs to be reminded that last February, they maximized allowable expenditures in their grant budgets and significantly reduced the teacher assistant staff to offset the current year's budget requirements. That luxury no longer exists. Further budget reductions will impact programs.

With that said, he welcomed any comments and/or questions.

Mr. Ward, as a point of order, suggested the Public Forum be placed on the next meeting because no one was in attendance tonight due to the bad weather. He asked Dr. D'Acchioli if he would make a list which would be included in their packet on suggestions of what could be cut in they absolutely had to cut something. List the choices as the first, second, third item....

Dr. D'Acchioli stated it would be difficult to have a basic education program. They are looking at a 6.60% when North Kingston is looking at a 12.4%, Seekonk 10.72%, Chariho 6.8, Coventry 11% and a current deficit same in South Kingston and Johnston having current deficits. The State needs to put money into the education system and reprioritize especially in urban areas. He can prepare a list but it won't be pretty and cuts will have to affect programs.

Chairman Dubois asked that a copy of the budget be posted on the website so folks can review it before coming to the meeting. They are, also, available at Dr. D'Acchioli's office and at the meeting that night.

**Motion to approve the FY06 School Budget subject to the Public Forum which is tabled until the next meeting on February 9th**

**JW Second: MB**

Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

Dr. D'Acchioli stated that the bulk of time since the last meeting has been devoted to impending storms and snow removal. He wished to take the time to commend the Facilities and Custodial staff for a remarkable clean up. The Administration is investigating the status of the Governor's State of Emergency as it applies

to paying staff for working last Monday. The school day will be made up since it was not the Governor who closed schools. The Governor strongly advised districts to close – he did not order it done.

He received many calls regarding why schools were not cancelled or why they did not have an early dismissal. First off, regardless of what call is made, there will be people unhappy with the decision. With that said, the message has been consistent for the past nine years and is premised on the fact that not all Woonsocket students would have adult supervision available should schools close or dismiss early. The following facts are reported in the 2004 RI Kids Count Fact Book regarding Woonsocket children:

- 46% of children live in a single-parent household
- 74% of children under 18 living in poverty
- Between 1998 and 2002, 191 children aged 15-17 gave birth
- 270 of our children have a parent incarcerated at the ACI
- 203 of our children in 2002 witnessed a reported domestic violence act
- 179 reported cases of child abuse and neglect
- 25% or 1 out of every 4 students has a special need

These are the students who need to remain under their watchful eyes. So, he encouraged parents to keep their children home or pick them up early if they feel that the weather conditions warrant such action. He asks only that they think about the children who fit one or more of the situations described earlier. The schools are open for them.

Last Saturday, Mr. Auclair, Mr. Bileau and Dr. D'Acchioli attended a conference sponsored by the RIASC. The conference was one of the best he has attended and dealt with Parliamentary Procedure, Open Meetings, Ethics and NCLB. It was a very worthwhile conference.

He closed with the hope that they will not get another storm predicted for this coming Sunday.

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

**MD Second: MB**

#### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD AND WELFARE:**

Mr. Ward asked that everyone pay close attention to the budget difficulties and to come to the meeting in two weeks and be part of the discussion. He met with Mr. Fontaine regarding a couple of things in a couple of the buildings and they have been taken care of. The Girls' Room at the Middle School is tragic. It will cost about 1K dollars per bathroom. Who was the architect that didn't include a stabilizing bar and who authorized the installation? Dr. D'Acchioli stated that Mr. Fontaine is going to speak with the Engineer and they are holding back more than enough money to cover this issue. Mr. Ward congratulated the All-Staters.

Mr. Auclair attended the School Committee 101 seminar and well done. He only wished they had more time to expand on issues. He thanked the R.I. Association of School Committees and all the presenters including Nicholas Long who spoke about Ethics; David Dumas who spoke about Parliamentary Procedure; David Abbott who spoke about No Child Left Behind and the upcoming changes. He, also, attended a fund raiser at Father Maret's CYO and they need to raise 200K to improve their fire systems brought about with changes made after the Station Club fire. Many facilities are being affected by the new changes. He is looking forward to more information on the budget in his meeting tomorrow with Dr. Macera.

Mr. Bileau stated that last Thursday, he attended the same center Mr. Auclair just mentioned followed by a citywide spelling be. He named the students again as listed in the Superintendent's report. He thanked all the parents, teachers, students, etc. for a great event. He stated that the parking at the Middle School is even more difficult with them losing parking spaces due to the snow. Dr. D'Acchioli stated that on occasion, they hire an outside contractor and they haul away the snow. They have a session planned this Saturday at the Middle School. It would have been sooner but the contractors were extremely busy this

week with the blizzard. He is very aware of the parking at many of their schools. Mr. Bileau stated he had attended the seminar, as well, where they stated what his job is and his responsibilities and it was very enlightening.

Chairman Dubois stated he was at Citizens yesterday at Ms. Boulay's 4<sup>th</sup> Grade class where a short story about history was read. He reminded everyone about the Safety Committee meeting next Wednesday. He thanked Mr. Auclair, Mr. Bileau and Dr. D'Acchioli for sharing with him what they learned at the mentioned seminar. He would attend but works on Saturdays and it makes it difficult. He wished the Patriots well in the upcoming Super Bowl.

**Motion to adjourn at 10:05 P.M.**

**MD Second: MB**

Unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,

Denise St Germain  
WSC Recording Secretary