

## MINUTES

### WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2005 7:00 PM – OPEN/CLOSED SESSION WACTC –ROOM 303

#### Call to Order

#### 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

#### GOOD AND WELFARE – PUBLIC

- **John McLaughlin, 632 So. Main Street, Woonsocket:** Spoke about the many things that need to be taken care of at the Woonsocket Middle School. He's glad about the extra money some school districts will be getting from the state, but feels bad for the young people who are new teachers with the pension reform bill that just passed. He cited the fact that teachers who become administrators automatically get a \$20,000 raise and doesn't think that is money well-spent when there are many other needs. Spoke about his neighbor who has been a volunteer police officer in the city for 16 years and hasn't gotten a job on the force yet. He referred to Mrs. Pauline Papino, saying that she is willing to work as an administrator at 10<sup>th</sup> step teacher's salary yet she cannot get a job. McLaughlin made a recommendation that there be steps for administrators and some probationary period like the department had a few years ago.
- **Rev. Sammy Vaughan, Pastor of St. James Baptist Church, Woonsocket:** Spoke about Carnell Henderson's appointment as Vice principal at the Woonsocket High School. He feels strongly that he is a super-qualified person and Carnell has assured him that he wants to come back to his home and alma mater. "I have known Carnell since he was a young man. We need more minorities in the school system. The kids need a role model that looks like them." Dr. D'Acchioli announced that Carnell was his candidate for recommendation. He also clarified the previous speaker's comments that the difference in pay for administrators is about \$13 a day because they work many more days than teachers do.
- **Richard DiPardo, 134 Huntington Ave., Woonsocket—WTG President:** Stated that he sat on the interviewing committee for the vice principal's position at the WHS. "Carnell Henderson was unanimously recommended for the position by the committee. He is one of the most outstanding candidates for an administrative position he has ever seen in the many years he has been in the system. He's glad to see that everyone is on the same page. DiPardo also said he represents 800 members of the WTG, including the people at the WMS. "In the past week since school has ended, I have received about 70 phone calls from the WMS faculty about what is going to happen with the principal there. The union didn't cause the difficulties at the WMS. The WTG and RIFT are willing to bring together all its resources to improve the scores at the WMS. What it needs is an administrator with the experience necessary and who listens to and values his/her staff. The WMS needs a change in leadership." DiPardo referenced an article in The Providence Journal three weeks ago and a quote by Dr. D'Acchioli that "teachers like to hide behind their contract." "I disputed that and asked to see a copy of his contract. I have repeatedly requested a copy and have yet to receive it. I requested it as the WTG president and as a taxpayer." He asked Dr. D'Acchioli why he hasn't gotten it. Dr. D'Acchioli didn't answer. Mr. DiPardo threatened to get a copy even if he has to go to court to get it. The only thing he received from D'Acchioli was letter saying it wasn't a public document. DiPardo thinks it is and asked Mr. Dubois to declare it a public document. "I am sending a letter to the business manager of the Woonsocket Education Dept. requesting a breakdown of the fringe benefits, pension, etc.," said DiPardo. Mr. Auclair announced that he was asked if he would meet with Mr. DiPardo and Donna Valentine to act as a mediator to see what's going on, with the hope that some conclusion could be arrived at. Mr. DiPardo said he would appreciate the opportunity to speak to any member of the WSC, but he doesn't think mediation is going to work. He would just like to see her transferred, not terminated. "Mediation may have had a chance back in February," he said. Mr. Dubois said he feels that the superintendent's contract is a public document also, since his salary is paid with taxpayers' money.
- **Eleanor Nadeau, Bailey Street, Woonsocket:** Said she was in total agreement with Mr. DiPardo about what should be done at the WMS. She read an article this morning in The Providence Journal about appointments and recommendations. "My suggestion is that it's now time to adopt a policy regarding appointments. During my tenure on the school committee, we were given the names of the top three candidates. Superintendents have too much power. Patronage still exists, but instead of it being in the hands of the school committee, it's in the hands of the superintendent. You need to take back the power (*to the school committee*). You need to face an election. The superintendent doesn't. He is here for two more years. It's you who have to face the voters. I think you have been misguided. Those are my observations. Unfortunately, I think a lot of people agree with me."







▪ **#05-30 Roof Replacement – WHS**

Motion to accept the recommendation of administration to award the bid to Patrick J. McKenna Roofing, Inc. of Pawtucket, RI, for \$218,980.00: J. Ward

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau (Unanimously Approved)

Mr. Ward asked that we get some assurance that it will be done when school is not in session. Mr. Bileau wanted to know which section was being repaired. Dr. D'Acchioli will have Peter Fontaine send him that information.

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**2. Approval of Administrative Leave**

Motion to approve: J. Ward

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau

**Roll Call Vote: MD-no / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes. Motion passes 3-1.**

Dr. D'Acchioli noted that under the new policy approved earlier on the agenda, it's the school committee's call. Mr. Auclair asked how granting this leave would be in the best interest of the WED. Dr. D'Acchioli indicated that nobody could be productive if their mid was elsewhere. The leave would be without pay or benefits. Mr. Ward suggested amending the policy in the future to be a little more specific about length of leaves, number of leaves, etc. Mr. Dubois didn't think that this is in the best interest of the WED. He might approve 6 months and then a review of the situation or something like that.

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**4. Appointment of Elementary Principals**

Motion to appoint **Nancy Zambarano** to the position of Elementary Principal with assignment to be determined at a later date: J. Ward

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau **Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes. Motion passes 4-0.**

Motion to appoint **Karen MacBeth** to the position of Elementary Principal for the 2005-2006 school year: M. Bileau

2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Ward **Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes. Motion passes 4-0.**

When asked about 75-day evaluations for new administrators, Dr. D'Acchioli stated that the policy is outdated and will be on the next agenda for revision. He would not apply the current policy to tonight's employees, saying it's very difficult to evaluate an administrator after only 75 days in a position. Mr. Auclair said he has seen very few evaluations in his tenure on the school committee, but Mr. Ward stated that Dr. Macera uses an extensive evaluation method.

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. D'Acchioli**

Since the closing of our schools on June 20, district administrators have been busy completing end of year activities and squeezing in vacation time. Last Monday, Mr. Bileau joined Middle School representatives at the Radisson for a roundtable discussion entitled "Reforming Middle Level Education: Considerations for Policymakers." Tomorrow the Superintendent will be participating in a day-long work-session of the New England School Leaders Advisory Council of which he is a member. This organization is a link of the regional LAB housed at Brown University. Friday Dr. D'Acchioli will be meeting with RIDE officials to review potential resources that may be made available to Woonsocket for the Middle School. Next week when most of our Directors will be back at work, a list will be compiled of potential budget reductions for Committee consideration. The Legislature's passage of pension reform will lessen our \$1.7M deficit by approximately \$700,000 leaving us with the monumental task of identifying an additional \$1M of expenditures of which we must cut.

**Motion to receive and place on file: A. Auclair**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau (Unan. Appr)**

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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD AND WELFARE:**

**J. Ward:** He believes one thing that came out of last week's meeting is that the VRA's in the elementary gave one assessment of reading skills and when the students enter the WMS, they are getting a totally different assessment. He will be asking Dr. Flaherty about how the two different methods can produce such different

results. "It affects what and how much of our resources are directed towards that school. Dr. D'Acchioli said that Linda Filomeno is investigating this issue. Asked about a letter they received from John Dionne regarding the use of Harris School for elections. Dr. D'Acchioli said that if he does need it, all he needs to do is ask. Mr. Ward researched the contracts of principals and superintendents regarding whether or not they are public documents. He received an answer from the Attorney General saying that the superintendent's contract is NOT a public document. However, the public is entitled to certain information. He congratulated everyone appointed tonight and wished them well.

**A. Auclair:** Congrats to people appointed tonight. "All three candidates do have the appropriate certifications by the state and they are currently active?" he asked. "Yes," said D'Acchioli. Mr. Auclair wants to know the number of WMS students who failed this year, as well as the number who have entered into a summer school program. "It's hard to believe that a student who is so far behind can complete a four-week program and be moved to the next grade." He will be addressing the promotion policy for the elementary level also. He has been working on parent/community engagement in the schools and gets a newsletter from RITAP, which stated that family engagement is not an initiative. "It's about doing things differently. Parents and the community should be involved in decision-making at all levels. Mr. Auclair asked if the WMS handbook has been approved for the coming year. Dr. D'Acchioli will check on it. Auclair spoke about the 30-day attendance policy and students failing for the year if it's exceeded without legitimate reasons. "It's not being done. We need to take a good look at what we have written down."

**M. Bileau:** Said to Carnell Henderson, "There's no place like home." Congrats to other candidates. Told Mr. McLaughlin that he would be happy to help him and Ms. Rollins.

**M. Dubois:** Congrats to everyone. Spoke about leave of absence for Debbie Ferranti, saying that he thinks a one-year leave for personal reasons is too long. He thinks it should be changed to three months or six months. He also wants to know how many kids passed with more than 30 days of unexcused absences. He asked Dr. D'Acchioli about how we can get someone to tape the school committee meetings during the summer. "It seems we shouldn't have to rely on student volunteers during the summer. I would like to see if someone would volunteer to do it for no pay."

The chair declared a 5-minute recess before going into closed session.

Public session ended at approximately 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle  
Substitute WSC Recording Secretary