

MINUTES

**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2005
7:00 PM – OPEN 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	Present

GOOD AND WELFARE – PUBLIC

- **George Coderre, 137 Crawford Street, Woonsocket, WMS Girls' Basketball Coach:** Said he had two children who attended the WHS and presently has one child at the WHS and one at the WMS. He said he hopes the WSC won't underestimate the importance of athletics at the WMS level. "They teach many things – commitment, teamwork, etc. For some kids, it's the only thing that keeps them in school. I have been coaching for 30 years and many times, a male coach is the only male role model some kids have in their lives. I am a fire fighter in Central Falls and I'm tired of our school system being the butt of jokes. Losing the sports program will just be another black eye." He showed the WSC a picture of Anthony Marsella for the Providence Journal and said that there was no finer ambassador for our city. "He is a reflection of our programs." Mr. Coderre added that the WMS sports program is the feeder system for the WHS and hopes that the WSC will seriously consider sports as vital to the school system.
- **Richard DiPardo, 134 Huntington Ave., Woonsocket—WTG President:** Spoke about potential cuts in teacher assistants and the fact that it's time to heal the WMS. "We will be getting a new principal there and with the right person on board, I think we can make a quick turnaround. I feel bad for you folks because we are telling you to do things and you are up against a wall." He asked Dr. D'Acchioli how much money has been allocated to capital improvements for 05-06. He was told that there is \$900,000 in that line item, but we get 80% of it reimbursed. D'Acchioli pointed out that if that money is used elsewhere, it would be a "short-term solution with disastrous results". "We are a 100% people service business. I suggest that you pass the budget that you need to run the school system and play hardball with the state, just like the Beacon Charter School did and got \$280,000. If they can do it, there's nothing stopping us from doing it. We lost 19 paras last year. The population we serve is changing. If you take my suggestion, I will personally be leading the cheers. Play hardball! Believe me, the state doesn't want to take over another school system," said DiPardo.
- **Linda Brillon, 48 Martin Street, Woonsocket:** Addressed the WSC regarding the medically fragile students having to ride a bus without air conditioning and the health threat posed to these kids. Her son has no temperature control and if he had ridden that bus, his temperature would have been 106 degrees. They only bus with air conditioning is Bus 20. She said there should be a backup and there are medical reasons for them requiring an air-conditioned bus.
- **Bruce Villeneuve, Athletic Director, WED:** Spoke in support of the WMS athletic programs, saying that over the past few years, the high school programs have been doing very well. He used Anthony Marsella as an example of a former middle school athlete. "He was selected the top student athlete in the state of RI. Why are we so successful in high school? Because we have an excellent feeder program at the WMS. Another example is Alysha Castonguay. She is a former middle school athlete and has been written up in and is on the cover of American Cheerleader Magazine. There are 54 middle school teams in the Interscholastic League. More than in high school. You will be saving .00039% of a \$60 million budget." He asked them to consider this very carefully.
- **Amanda Carriere, recent graduate:** Said she started playing sports in middle school and will be attending Dean College on a basketball scholarship. "Sports kept me focused in school and I have so many more friends since I joined sports. I have many friends that live in the projects that play basketball everyday because they have nothing else. They strive to pass three classes because sports are their life. You stay out of trouble so you can still play. You go to school because you want to play."

- **Sharon – student:** Spoke about being in an intramural program at a parochial school she was in. She also works with kids at Dunn Park doing sports and played sports when she went to the middle school. She said it makes it easier to play at the high school level and it motivates kids to do well in school so they can play.
- **Taylor Sautel – student:** Stated that she started playing basketball in the middle school and will be playing varsity basketball this year at the WHS.
- **Marlene Smith, 7th Grade WMS Teacher:** Said she's not a sports person, but she does see the effect that it has on kids' behavior and academics when they want to play. "It has a very good effect, especially on the boys." At the meeting of June 22nd, the teachers were asked for possible solutions to problems at the WMS. Some of the suggestions she received were as follows: 1) Middle school students don't always get to the WMS prepared. One suggestion was to test the 5th and 6th grade students in reading and math. 2) Someone also told her that they heard on WOON Radio this morning that it didn't look like the MED Zone will come to pass, so they are going to Plan "B". The suggestion was to consider moving the entire 6th grade to George Street School and revamp the curriculum. 3) Inclusion isn't working because the paras were cut. 4) Let teachers teach 5 classes and split the kids with reading problems into separate groups. 5) Someone heard that the state was going to give the WED \$300,000 for house leaders. Why can't we go back to team leaders? Why don't we challenge the state more on some of the things they do? "Many people are afraid to send their kids to the middle school. Not everyone can afford to send their kids to private school."
- **Denise Auclair, Harris Avenue, Woonsocket:** She read that 3.5 kindergarten teachers will be let go and wanted to know which schools will be affected. Mr. Dubois told her they would be discussing that later in the meeting.
- **Michelle Oceca, WED Kindergarten Teacher:** Spoke about her teacher assistant and how invaluable she is in her classroom. She listed many of the things her assistant does and said it will be very hard without her.
- **John Boudreau, WTG Vice President:** Spoke about cuts to paras and the training programs that many of them have taken advantage of. He thinks the WSC should challenge the city, not just the state. He feels we need to get some more money out of the city and asked the WSC to please try to get it somewhere.
- **Linda Maczejewski, St. Hughes Street, Woonsocket:** She's upset that the budget always seems to be balanced on the backs of our kids. She can't figure out how the proposed cuts will be cheaper in the long run.
- **Nellie Gray, 55 Arlington Street, Woonsocket—WHS Girls' Basketball Coach:** Said she attended both the WMS and WHS. In middle school, she had a lot of problems and sports kept her going to school. The coaches kept telling her how good she could be. When she was playing sports, her grades were up. She gets phone calls and knocks on her door now as the girls' basketball coach from players wanting to talk about their problems. "It would be a mistake to take the sports away."

RECOGNITIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – Dr. D'Acchioli

Congratulated Anthony Marsella for being named the 2005 Providence Journal Honor Roll Boy. Anthony, who recently graduated, earned this prestigious honor for his outstanding high school record in sports and academics. He joins a 1985 honoree as one of the only Woonsocket High Students to receive this award that symbolizes the outstanding RI senior male high school student athlete. Alysha Castonguay was the cover girl of American Cheerleader magazine, a national publication, as National Cheerleader of the month. She also was featured in the magazine. Once again, two Woonsocket Area Career Technical Center students represented Rhode Island in the National Skills Olympics and finished in the top ten in the country. Meghan Minot received a 3rd place Bronze Medal in the Nurse Assistant Competition. And Holly-Ann Glaude placed 8th in the nation in the Action Skills Competition.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Bileau

2nd: J. Ward (Unanimously Approved)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

6/8/05 OPEN--CORRECTION TO 6/22/05 OPEN MINUTES PG. 3--6/29/05 OPEN/CLOSED

Motion to table: M. Bileau

2nd: A. Auclair/J. Ward (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Personnel Actions (See attached)

Certified Appointments/
Non-Certified Appointments

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000:

Local Funds:	Adirondack / Citizens / Ed Supplies	2,229.30
	Dell Computers / Technology / Computers	16,697.12
	Diane Vachon / Globe Park / Nurse/Medically Fragile	50,830.00

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- **Nextel Comm. – District Wireless Phone Service - \$12,071.08**
Motion to approve: J. Ward 2nd: M. Bileau (Unan. Approved)

Mrs. Williams asked what this was for. Dr. D'Acchioli explained that it's for the phones that have walkie-talkie features because the cell phones don't work as well in some of our buildings. "Nextel is used primarily with the maintenance and technology staff. Our actual cost after reimbursement is more like \$6,000—not \$12,000," he said. Mr. Ward added that walkie-talkies need to be maintained and it would be more costly due to lack of reimbursement.

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- **Sonitrol – Facilities – Security Monitoring - \$43,555.68**
Motion to approve: M. Dubois 2nd: J. Ward (Unan. Approved)

Mr. Auclair asked what this expense was for. Mrs. Goodman explained that it is the monitoring service we use for all the buildings in the district. They provide the building security for the district. We have their equipment installed; therefore, we can't go out to bid for another provider.

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- **Verizon Wireless/ Mobile Phone Service / District - \$12,362.18**
Motion to Table: M. Dubois 2nd: A. Auclair
Roll Call Vote: AA-yes / MB-yes / MW-yes / MD-yes / JW-no. Passes 4-1 **MOTION TABLED.**

Mr. Dubois requested a breakdown of cell phone usage by the administration. Dr. D'Acchioli said that two thirds of the \$12,362 is reimbursable, but Mr. Dubois had a problem with 19 people having cell phones when the WED is trying to cut costs. Dr. D'Acchioli maintained that some of these people need cell phones. Mr. Dubois maintained that many people now have their own cell phones and wants to see the list cut down.

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

CONFERENCES: Discussion of FY06 Fiscal Budget

Dr. D'Acchioli said he has been asking residents to address the City Council since last December for more funds. "Not one person who spoke tonight has done that. Legally, we are required to submit a balanced budget," he said. D'Acchioli stated that \$665,948 was saved by the retirement legislation that just went through. He spoke about the Promac lawsuit and attorney fees. The situation with the full-day kindergartens being formally cut will allow him to use grant money to replace them. He explained that the budget changes daily and that there is no wiggle room. "It was bad last year and I saw it getting worse. I don't want to cut anything and dismantle what has taken so long to create. I have been a protector of athletics since I've been here. I advise the WSC and the public to go to the next City Council meeting and plead our case.

Mr. Ward thanked everyone who showed up and spoke. He talked about the need for an intramural program for kids that don't make the school team, saying it gives them another option. "There's a presumption that it's not competitive. We need something to give the WMS students more of an opportunity to interact across cultures and across neighborhoods," he said. Ward spoke about his son who was on an all-star Pony league basketball team and was cut from the WMS team three years in a row. "He was punished for his father being on the school committee. It wasn't just my kid—there were two other kids who I tried to intervene for regarding their physicals being done in time for try-outs who were also cut," Ward said. He asked what the farthest distance was that the school team travels. Mr. Villeneuve told him they keep closer to home—just northern RI. Mr. Ward was concerned about suspensions for athletes and what is in the handbook. "The current policy book says that student athletes can compete in weekend events at the discretion of the principal. I have a hard time with a student athlete being suspended for five days (Monday to Friday) and then still being given the opportunity to play in the weekend game," said Ward. Mr. Villeneuve said he hopes that the coach would not allow that to happen. He and Mr. Nasuti are working on that issue. Mr. Ward asked how much parent-choice busing cost us last year under Title I. Mrs. Goodman told him it was \$53,000. She added that the majority of the elementary schools are Title I and that we are mandated to set aside 20% of the Title I budget for supplementary costs, which amounted to \$53,000 for busing and \$50,000 for other services that were provided last year. Ward suggested cutting the allocation for legal fees in order to restore the WMS sports program and the paras.

Mr. Auclair heard that some funds that were supposed to come to Woonsocket went to Central Falls because they are a state-run school and asked if that was true. Mr. Ward informed him that those were the funds that the state took from the other schools because the state-run school in Central Falls ran a deficit. Mr. Auclair questioned the cost-effectiveness of oversized classrooms and the line item for \$150,000. Dr. D'Acchioli explained that it's the most cost-effective way to address minor overcrowded situations. Auclair was concerned about the copay for teachers on their health and dental benefits have gone down from 20% to 15% while costs are going up. Dr. D'Acchioli explained that we are the only ones with a 20% co-pay and we have to remain competitive. "We still have one of the highest copays in the state at 15%," maintained D'Acchioli. Mr. Auclair is not comfortable cutting anyone that works with students—teachers or paras. "Start cutting our overhead at McFee first," he said. Dr. D'Acchioli referenced the InSight program that the state uses to track expenditures for each school district and how we are one of the lowest districts in spending for leadership out of all the districts. He encouraged them to check the RIDE website for this information. "We are cutting a clerk at McFee and a technology position. We won't be able to post things on the website that the WSC asks for because of it. We cut our own checks and pay our own bills. Before I came here, the city did that for us, then they said they wanted us to take it over," said D'Acchioli. Mr. Auclair thinks we need to look at how efficiently we run and maybe then we could reduce staffing. Mr. Bileau was all for keeping the athletics at the WMS and spoke in favor of after school programs. Mr. Dubois thought Dr. D'Acchioli had threatened that if more staff is cut at McFee, people won't get their checks on time and took exception to it. Dr. D'Acchioli apologized for the ambiguity and explained that the service that we are used to will probably diminish. The people at McFee already go the extra mile," explained D'Acchioli.

Mrs. Williams agreed with Mr. Auclair and Mr. Dubois about more cuts being needed at McFee. She doesn't feel that every single director needs a secretary. Every administrator at McFee has their own secretary. She would like to go and spend a day to see what they are doing all day. She also favors keeping the WMS athletics program. Mr. Ward spoke about the capital improvement funds and keeping up the buildings. "If we cut that money, Mr. DiPardo will be right back here asking us why we aren't fixing our buildings," he said. He then asked why everyone at McFee does have a secretary. Dr. D'Acchioli explained that every clerk has unique responsibilities and that five clerks and secretaries are paid for out of grant funds and one assistant special education director is paid for out of grant funds. Mr. Ward told Mr. DiPardo, "If we approve a budget with money we don't have, when we run short, we need to go to the city—not the state."

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Bileau

2nd: J. Ward (Unan. Approved)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Approval of WMS Handbooks –2nd Passage:

Motion to approve: M. Dubois

2nd: M. Bileau

[Roll Call Vote: MD=yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW=yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

Dr. D'Acchioli suggested an amendment for the attendance policy and approval for second passage so that the book can be printed, saying that a notice can be sent out if the policy is changed.

2. Approval of Protocol of Student Hearings:

Motion to approve: M. Dubois

2nd: M. Williams

[Roll Call Vote: MD=yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW=yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

Mr. Dubois stated that a district hearing officer will handle some things that originally came before the school committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Bid Award:

▪ #05-26 High School Arts Supplies

Motion to Approve recommendation of administration to award to Nasco Arts & Crafts for \$1,443.52 and Sax Arts & Crafts for \$1,165.86: J. Ward

2nd: M. Bileau

[Roll Call Vote: MD=yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW=yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

▪ #05-27 Tractor for Barry Field

Motion to approve the recommendation to award to Norfolk Power Equipment of Burrillville, RI, for a total of \$31,275.00: J. Ward

2nd: M. Bileau

[Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW-yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

▪ **#05-31 Pest Control- Woonsocket School District**

Motion to approve award to Griggs & Browne of Providence, RI, for a total of \$21,960.00: J. Ward
2nd: M. Bileau/A. Auclair

[Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW-yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

Mr. Ward asked that facilities make sure that the company has access to the Sodexho area at the WMS.

2. Policy Amendment-- P2-4 Job Descriptions – 1st Passage

Motion to approve: A. Auclair 2nd: M. Bileau

[Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW-yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

Mr. Bileau asked why we hire people with direct-start contracts when in the real world, people have to prove that they can do the job before they get a contract. He feels that if we didn't do that, we wouldn't get stuck with people that aren't doing their job. Dr. D'Acchioli explained that we have a practice of giving a one-year contract, but Mr. Bileau disagreed. D'Acchioli maintained that every assistant principal at the WHS and WMS has a one-year contract. "Who is reviewing these people? I have never seen us get rid of anyone that wasn't doing the job," claimed Bileau. Dr. D'Acchioli claimed there were two people he wanted to non-renew and the school committee over-ruled it. Mr. Ward had a blank copy of an evaluation form from Dr. Macera, which is very in-depth. He recalled that the WED has gotten rid of plenty of people in his 10 years on the WSC. Eighteen of the new hires have a one-year contract with a six-month notification. Mr. Auclair would like to see the word "vacant" left in the policy. "It gives the opportunity to review the job specs with a change of personnel. I think the 6-month review should be left in there also," he added. He wants non-union contracts and policy to be tied into each other. Mr. Ward asked that a specification be included that the decision to continue becomes an affirmative act. Mr. Auclair thinks a minimum should be set for an administrator's copay, but Dr. D'Acchioli feels that would create a hiring nightmare. Mr. Dubois suggested we have a tiered system, but Mrs. Goodman informed him that we already have a three-tiered system.

3. Approval of Job Description for Principal for Alternative Education Program

Motion to approve: M. Dubois 2nd: A. Auclair

[Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW-yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

Dr. D'Acchioli explained that this position has been created for Donna Valentine since she is still under contract and has a salary coming to her. A position at McFee has not been filled in order to fund this position. Mr. Dubois asked if this position will end when Ms. Valentine leaves or if it will continue. Dr. D'Acchioli would like to see the special needs position restored at McFee. Mr. Auclair asked that this position be instituted on a trial basis.

4. Policy Amendment – P3-6 Progress Report/Promotion Policy- 1st Passage

Motion to approve: A. Auclair 2nd: M. Dubois

[Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW-yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

Mr. Auclair explained that this deals with Grades 1-5. He doesn't believe in promoting kids to the WMS and hoping that they will catch up.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. D'Acchioli

Dr. D'Acchioli met with the Mayor this morning regarding the formation of a school building construction team. The timeline is extremely tight so the Chairman will need to identify two committee members to serve on this Committee. They will be joined by two members of the City Council, up to two members of the Community and selected representatives from the City and School administrations. City residents who desire to serve on this meeting need to write to the School Committee Chairman ASAP. It has been brought to his attention that the WSC is again contemplating Universal Free Breakfast pilots in the district. As Superintendent, he will implement whatever programs the WSC requires. However, he went on record as not recommending this action. Given the budgetary issues, which included transferring the lunchroom monitor costs from the local budget into the food

service account, he advised the WSC that it will soon face the likely possibility of raising the cost of all student lunches. He feels that to provide free breakfasts to students who can afford to pay for breakfast and then raise lunch prices is unconscionable.

The Superintendent also referenced an article in the Providence Journal charging the North Kingstown School Committee with violating the Open Meetings Law prompted a reminder that copying emails to each other to impart ideas or conduct school business outside of school committee meetings is a violation of the Open Meetings Law.

The Superintendent also noted that as of this afternoon, the WED has received only 7 applications for the MS principalship. The application period closes on July 25th. An interview team is being assembled which will include a school committee member, the union president, the MS SIT chair, the MS PTO president, two MS teachers and the usual team of Directors. The timeline is to conduct interviews on Tuesday, July 26 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM with an appointment recommendation scheduled for the August 10 SC meeting. If the WED does not get more applicants with solid proven administrative experience, we may have to re-advertise for the position and use an interim principal to open the school. Reminder that RIDE is conducting a work-session on Friday, July 29th to discuss corrective action plans for the Middle School. Schools open in five short weeks and the Administration is working very hard to prepare for a smooth opening. He wished our students a healthy and happy remainder of the summer but also reminded them to complete the required summer reading.

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Auclair

2nd: M. Bileau/M. Williams (Unan. Appr)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD AND WELFARE:

M. Williams: Thanked everyone for coming out. Congratulated Carnell Henderson on his appointment. Encouraged the public to attend the city council meeting and let them know what's going on with the schools.

A. Auclair: Thinks that the Building sub-committee should be the ones to meet with the Mayor regarding the new middle school. He would like to see the Finance subcommittee meet with the Mayor and the City Council because they don't trust what we are spending our money on. "We need to create a partnership. Have a workshop. I'm happy we are finally looking at some of the policies." Thanked people for coming.

M. Bileau: He will send Mr. Fontaine a request for a workshop. Asked Dr. D'Acchioli who will be attending the meeting with the state next Friday. Dr. D'Acchioli told him that Mr. Dubois, Mr. DiPardo, the WMS SIT Team and some Directors will be attending.

M. Dubois: Said that the meeting with the state next Friday is being held during the day. "We can't attend them all." He asked Mr. Wrona how he did taping the meeting and thanked him for stepping up to the plate to tape the meetings. In regards to the budget, he said that even though we often get reimbursed, if it's 60%--we are still paying 40%.

J. Ward: In regards to the copay revision, he said it was done in light of what was being done in other districts. "It was hoped that the rest of the communities would follow suit when we instituted the copay years ago; but 14 years later the Mayor is still trying to negotiate a copay with the police and fire departments." He thanked the state and the Mayor and BLB for moving on the topic of bonding a new middle school. Congratulated Anthony Marsella.

Public session ended at 11:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle
Substitute WSC Recording Secretary